




3 1761 11895289 4





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2024 with funding from  
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761118952894>













No. 121

N° 121

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

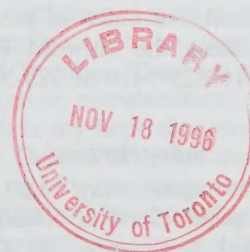
Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 6 November 1996

Mercredi 6 novembre 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service

3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2

Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats

3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2

Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430

Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 6 November 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 6 novembre 1996

*The House met at 1336.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I rise today to recognize Take Our Kids To Work Day, an initiative of the Learning Partnership to give grade 9 students a real-life experience in a work environment. We have a number of students with us in the galleries today and I would like to welcome them.

It's estimated that across Canada about 250,000 grade 9 students are at work today with a parent, a guardian, a relative, a family friend or a volunteer host. I'm proud to say that today the Liberal caucus is hosting several students, both in constituency offices and here at Queen's Park, some of whom are with us.

Take Our Kids To Work Day has three main objectives: to offer students a realistic view of the work world and give them an understanding of its demands and opportunities; to allow students to see their parents or volunteer hosts in different roles and understand what they do to support a family; and to emphasize that education goes far beyond the classroom walls, and the preparation of the younger generation for the future is a community responsibility.

Take Our Kids To Work Day was initiated two years ago in the greater Toronto area by the Learning Partnership, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating learning and career opportunities by bonding education, business and the community. This year is the first Canada-wide initiative.

Recognizing that there are many grade 9 students who are unable to go to work with a parent, either because their parents are out of work or for other reasons, we have particularly encouraged our members to offer the opportunity first to those students who otherwise might not have the chance to participate.

### CHILD CARE

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I'm pleased to report to you today that I have just completed a province-wide tour of communities, meeting with parents and child care workers, talking about the government's proposed reform to the child care system in this province. What I'm distressed to have to report to you is the state of fear and anger and desperation that I found in community after community.

The minister's proposals for reform of the child care system, and I believe this is not at all an overstatement,

really spell the end, the death, the dismantling of the quality not-for-profit licensed child care system in this province.

A combination of factors which involve lowering the wages of already low-paid professionals, early childhood educators, together with a concentration on the business bottom line, increasing productivity, more children per staff worker, with removing safety and health regulations for the physical space that are our children are served in so that they can be shoved back into basements with no windows, no fencing around their play yards, no minimum space per child, together with a weakening of the licensing and the monitoring provisions, spell the death of a quality system and I think spell a bleak future for many children who need that service.

The child care system in this province has been a long time in the building. It's worth fighting for, the child care workers are worth fighting for and our kids are worth fighting for.

### TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY

**Mr Carl DeFaria (Mississauga East):** On behalf of the government I also wish to recognize Wednesday, November 6, 1996, as Take Our Kids to Work Day. Today in Ontario up to 250,000 grade 9 students will accompany a friend, parent or volunteer to the workplace. This special day gives grade 9 students a chance to see different roles and responsibilities in the workplace. It also allows students a chance to see what the parent does to support the family and it emphasizes that education goes beyond classroom walls.

This day is an initiative of the Learning Partnership, a non-profit organization, with the support of the Minister of Education and Training. They are dedicated to bringing together education, communities and business people in the province. It is my hope that through this exposure young people in Ontario will see the value of a good education in our rapidly changing workplace.

I'm proud to have my daughter Kristen with me today at my Queen's Park office. I'm sure other members and staff have their own children here today, or perhaps they are hosting a student from their riding. I welcome them all.

As a parent I applaud the Minister of Education for this wonderful project.

### FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** Today I had the pleasure of speaking to thousands of firefighters on the lawn of the Legislature, and an angrier group of people I haven't seen in a long time. They were protesting Bill



84, another bully bill, in fact, the son of Bill 26, the mother of all bully bills.

The Harris Tories with their anti-labour agenda are attacking Ontario firefighters, the men and women who risk their lives every day for all of us in this province, by inserting a poisonous pill in Bill 84 that will take away bargaining rights from firefighters.

Mike Harris broke another promise, this time to Ontario firefighters. He promised he would consult with the firefighters before he proceeded with fire safety reform. Again he broke his word and again he has bargained in bad faith. These labour relations provisions never came up in the lengthy fire service review. They were put in by an anti-labour Tory government.

Ontario firefighters have never struck. It is their code not to do so. This bill is a slap in the face of every Ontario firefighter right across this province.

I am calling upon the government to allow for public hearings right across this province so that the firefighters and the men and women they protect can tell this government why Bill 84 is a bad bill and will set back the quality of fire protection in Ontario.

#### ONTARIO HYDRO

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I rise today to give notice to this House of a project the NDP has recently completed. Last month my colleague the member for Riverdale and I, with the able assistance of the Power Workers' Union, toured the province, talking to people about the privatization of Ontario Hydro.

Not surprisingly, people do not want Hydro to be sold off to the highest bidder. People are concerned that a privatized Hydro means higher rates and lower environmental standards.

We know that the only people who will benefit from the sale of Ontario Hydro are your Tory friends on Bay Street and Wall Street. Ratepayers and families will be faced with rate increases.

We heard from environmental groups concerned that private companies are not going to worry about environmental regulations when there are profits to be made. We heard from social justice groups angry that on top of a 22% cut in welfare payments, an increase in the hydro rates would force many social assistance recipients out of their homes and on to the streets. Municipal councillors and leaders addressed the task force. They were concerned about the economic and social impact privatization will have on their communities.

In a few weeks I will present the government with our report and summaries of our task force on Hydro privatization. I urge the Premier to read it with an open mind and to listen to what the people of Ontario are saying about their publicly owned utility: Ontario Hydro is ours. It's not for sale. Don't sell Hydro. Stop the sellout.

#### PROJECT P

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** I rise today to offer congratulations and thanks to Detective Sergeant Bob Matthews and the Ontario Provincial Police. On October 3, 1996, Detective Sergeant Matthews and his

unit, called Project P, made what is believed to be the largest seizure of child pornography in Canadian history.

Project P works with the United States customs and the FBI to track sources of child porn transmitted over the Internet. A joint investigation led to the seizure in Kirkland Lake of 20,000 computer files containing photos and video clips of young children engaged in activity which would shock and disgust all but the most depraved members of our society. It is a record of abuse, pain and dehumanization. Both as a father and as a member of this assembly, I'm profoundly grateful to Project P not only for the Kirkland Lake seizure, but also for their sense of duty in spite of the heartbreaking nature of their investigations.

Most importantly, I issue a warning to those who would participate in the production and distribution of pornography. Project P is watching you, as are members of this assembly. This seizure proves that illegal activity on the Internet can be tracked and that those who would choose to use the information highway to victimize others will be prosecuted.

Today I ask all members to join me in thanking Detective Sergeant Matthews and his team at Project P.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** Today the mayor of Mississauga, Hazel McCallion, and Paul Pagnuelo of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation are joining the battle against Mike Harris's mega-city monster that he's creating for Metropolitan Toronto.

The feisty mayor of Mississauga says she doesn't like monsters and doesn't support creating monsters in government. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation says in its press release that the mega-city monster will result in higher costs, higher taxes and lower quality of services. They say the mega-city will be a mega-mistake. The press release goes on to say:

"Amalgamating Metro Toronto's six municipalities into one mega-city will be a mega-mistake and will set a dangerous precedent for future restructuring across the province...."

"Municipal government reform in the Metro area and across the province should result in smaller government, not necessarily a smaller number of governments...."

"The mega-city concept supported by the municipal affairs minister will dilute democratic control of local government by citizens, increase the power of special interests," Pagnuelo says. "Government will be more costly, leading to higher taxes. It will result in lower service quality, make the Metro area less competitive, and will stifle innovation."

This is a mega-mistake. The taxpayers of Metro Toronto deserve at least a say before they are devoured by this mega-city monster. Stop the monster.

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I have received a very compelling letter from the students in class 208 at the Metropolitan Toronto School for the Deaf. I would like the government members to take note because I



believe the students have made some very valuable points. I will quote directly from the letter because it is in the children's own words.

"We have new teachers at our school. We don't want them to get laid off. We also have assistants. They help us. We don't want them to get laid off. We need our teachers to help us learn. Fewer teachers means we can't learn as much. We have nice class sizes. We don't want to be mixed in with other classes. We have two interpreters. If we lose our interpreters, we won't be able to go to integration."

They go on to say: "The government is cutting too much money from poor people. They will have no money to buy food and clothes. Why aren't you nice to poorer people? We don't like what you are doing. Please respect our ideas."

These students urge you, Mr Premier, to stop the cuts to their education funding, and I applaud their initiative in letting their views be known. These 10- to 12-year-olds at the Metropolitan Toronto School for the Deaf will not sit back while this government steamrollers over their basic right to a good education.

1350

#### REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** Next Monday, November 11, while members of this House are back in their constituencies, Canadians across the country will pay tribute to the tens of thousands of men and women who put their lives on the line to ensure our freedom.

As we head towards the next millennium, we are at peace. We are at peace because of our valiant war veterans and their fallen comrades.

Throughout this century, the world has been embroiled in war. Throughout it all, democracy prevailed. I pray we have learned our lessons from the past and value the freedom we have today. So many brave soldiers have guaranteed freedom for us with their courage, their blood and their lives.

We cannot look to the bright horizons of the 21st century unless we recognize our past. While the opportunities before us are limitless, we can never lose sight of the fact that others built this land of opportunity.

So on November 11, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 13 on Kingston Road, the Dambusters Branch 617 on Warden Avenue, the Oakridge Branch 73 on Robinson Avenue, the Baron Byng Branch 11 on Coxwell Avenue, Beaches Branch 42 on Kingston Road and the Woodbine Heights Branch 22 on Woodbine Avenue will pay tribute to the sacrifices of the brave men and women who have passed the bright torch of freedom to us. It is our duty to join them to preserve and protect that torch so that it will continue to burn brightly for those who will follow us.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today participants of the Take Our Kids to Work Day. Would you please join me in welcoming our guests. Welcome.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** It is with pleasure I rise in the Legislature today to officially launch our government's child nutrition partnership, Ontario Breakfast for Learning.

The members of the Legislature will know that I have personally been a strong advocate of cooperative efforts that help ensure that every elementary child receives the nutrition that he or she needs. We all know that when children go to school hungry, they are not good learners, and that's why in our very first budget our government committed up to \$5 million to help parents and communities set up and expand local nutrition programs.

The program is being administered by the Canadian Living Foundation, our partners in this endeavour. Let me assure the members of the Legislature that the foundation has a proven track record of getting the private sector to support child nutrition programs across the country. There is no other national nor provincial organization whose sole mandate is to support child nutrition programs, and by partnering with the foundation the government is building upon its experiences rather than duplicating a pre-existing program or creating a huge bureaucracy.

I'm pleased to announce that as of today 56 nutrition programs across Ontario have been approved for government funding through this partnership agreement. The Canadian Living Foundation hopes to have approved allocations for a total of 700 programs on behalf of the government of Ontario over the next two years. Six community partnership programs have also been approved in order for parents' groups, service clubs, health departments, school boards and community-based organizations to work cooperatively to establish programs.

As well, the Ontario Breakfast for Learning 1-800 line is now in operation. Ontarians can learn how to establish child nutrition programs in their communities by calling 1-800-627-7922, and I encourage them to do so.

Earlier this year I announced that the Grocery Industry Foundation Together, known as GIFT, was also participating in our nutrition partnership. GIFT committed \$3 million over three years in food and distribution costs.

This morning I was proud to gather with representatives of GIFT and the Canadian Living Foundation to congratulate and thank cereal manufacturers for their donation of more than four million servings of breakfast cereal. The cereal manufacturers are the first food producers to participate in the Ontario Breakfast for Learning partnership. Currently, under the leadership of GIFT, additional food companies and marketing boards are working to fulfil their commitment, and I expect to bring further announcements in the near future.

I know that several members on all sides of this House are supportive of this initiative. I know our entire caucus — the member for Windsor-Sandwich and the member for Dovercourt have been talking about this need over the last number of years in various parties, over 10 years, and I just want to say that I encourage all members to



participate in their own communities in this worthwhile initiative.

I've often said that Ontarians working together can do far more than government will ever do by itself and I'll continue to provide everyone with a periodic update on the program as we collectively work towards ensuring that each child in Ontario has the nutrition that he or she needs to be a good learner.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** It is my pleasure to respond to an announcement that, quite frankly, I believe the Premier dusted off from the last time he made an announcement because, as I went through his press release and attended his conference as well this morning, I realized that he hasn't said anything new, that in fact the partners who were partners have been partners for some time.

The people who were today on the steps of the Legislature, outside of government, are those who are truly concerned about the nutritional needs of children. I commend Bill McEwan from A&P who is leading the charge on behalf of GIFT to make sure that good food falls into the hands of children, and I commend the Canadian Living Foundation, for many, many years looking to government to say, "Please play a leadership role in this."

I must say, too, the irony of the Premier standing on the steps of the Legislature today, today of all days, this week of all weeks. Quite frankly, the Premier is having a bad week and is looking desperately for something. To roll in these rigs of cereal in front of the steps of the Legislature and at the appropriate moment to have the horns blowing and rolling away from Queen's Park, only to reveal what? A sea of black and grey coats of fire-fighters who are here to send a message to the Premier. I find it very strange that the Premier would take today of all days to try to bring in good news — good news, quite frankly, that has been the case for Canadian Living Foundation, for GIFT as an organization, for some time.

Yes, we applaud those organizations for what they're doing. We don't appreciate the fact that it's being used and that they've been co-opted in a political way because the Premier's had a bad week. Because this week we found a reversal on his position on Ipperwash. Because this week he tried to ram through VLT legislation, the slot machines, without encouraging further debate. Because this week the Premier's having a bad week.

In fact, there was nothing new in the announcement today. Instead, I encourage the Premier to go back to the proposal that we initiated months ago in February 1995 to say, "Look at how you really can introduce a program that means more assistance for people at the front line really delivering the programs."

I'll tell you the irony. The words from Bill McEwan this morning really need to be heard by the Minister of Education: that the people, mostly teachers, principals and vice-principals who actually lead the programs at the front-line levels in schools are the ones who have never been more demoralized than they are today because the Ministry of Education under a Harris government is attacking those very people who lead at the front line. The irony, Premier, for you to do this today. What we need for you to tell those people who actually lead these

programs: They are important and the work they do for the children of Ontario is most important.

I will give a few moments to my colleague from Oriole as well.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** I speak now as our critic for women's issues and I say to the Premier that his announcement today in this House was nothing more than a crass, cynical, partisan announcement. Nothing new was suggested. His comments outside this House are the ones that I wish to address my attention to because to suggest that welfare cuts have not had an impact on hunger in children is ludicrous. To suggest that unemployment and the lack of jobs for people in this province has not had an impact on the issue of hunger for children is ludicrous. In fact, we know that high unemployment rates and cuts to welfare have had a very negative and serious effect on the children of this province. They are living in poverty and they are hungry because of the policies of this government.

Further, and I say this thoughtfully and with caution, I say to the Premier that to blame the mothers of this province, to blame women who are working to support their families, for the fact that their children are not getting breakfast before they go to school could clearly be considered a sexist comment by many, myself included.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I would like to commend the member for Windsor-Sandwich for her initiative, which the Premier has now tried to take up, not with much success. Without all the prodding she has done, without the speeches in the House, we wouldn't even have had an announcement of this kind today.

1400

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I would like to respond to the Premier. Perhaps if he returns I'll be able to speak to him directly. I want him to think of his announcement today in the context of a report that was recently issued by the Ontario Social Safety Network. It was a one-year anniversary report on the cuts to welfare.

Premier, you need to know that more and more children are going hungry and that your stopgap measure is not going to address the basic problem here. Ontario is facing a hunger epidemic, as is set out in this report. Food bank use has skyrocketed. Some examples: a 102% increase at a Belleville food bank from June 1995 to June 1996; a 150% increase at a Rainy River food bank; nearly 400% in London.

The quotes from families in here are heart-breaking. Let me just relate a couple to you. A single woman on GWA with a 19-year-old disabled son living with her has unplugged her fridge because she can't afford to buy food. In your community of North Bay, a social worker says, "I see a particular problem with babies on special formulas which are costly, and service providers tell me that many moms are giving their babies 2% milk instead of formula, or watered-down formula."

More and more kids are going hungry. There are 71,000 children living in families now reliant on food banks, and over a quarter of all children in families receiving social assistance who go to food banks regularly are missing meals once a day at this point in time.



Premier, you have to address the core issues here. You cannot deny the relationship between your cuts in welfare and what is happening with children and hunger in this province. For you to say today in this press conference you held that there is no link, and to say that lifestyles have changed and if you go back 30 or 40 years ago when it seemed there was a mom in the kitchen with a hot breakfast cooking and everyone woke up in the morning and ate — how dare you? How dare you blame women? How dare you blame mothers for the poverty of children and for the hunger of children? How dare you? June Cleaver doesn't live on my street, Premier. June Cleaver doesn't live in our communities any more.

We need a government that is compassionate, a government that cares about children, about children's hunger, not a government that makes an announcement today while there are 30 breakfast programs in this city — the Toronto Children's Breakfast Club — that have pink-slipped their employees and are about to close down because you've not made any of this money available to them. You won't respond to them. Deal with the problems that are there. Deal with kids' hunger. Deal with the programs we already have. Don't give us a lot of hoopla out on the front lawn of this Legislature when kids are going hungry.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Mr Premier, I'd like to invite you today to come to a breakfast club in my riding, the Blake-Boulton Breakfast Club, which is going to shut down at the end of December, which has tried to contact you and just, I believe, communicated with the parliamentary assistant, which got a letter back from you saying it's been passed on to the Minister of Community and Social Services. There are 30 existing breakfast clubs shutting down in this province at the end of December and they have not been able to get a response from your government. The buck has been passed all the way down the line. These have been in existence for eight years. They are doing a good job. They operate on a shoestring budget, but they do need a little bit of operating money because you need a coordinator, often, in these communities to make it happen.

I want to invite you to Blake-Boulton to talk to some of the women, the volunteers who come daily. They get up in the morning. They're not in their own kitchens cooking breakfast. They're off at that breakfast club volunteering every morning to cook a hot meal for those kids. I say, as my colleagues said, I was shocked to read this quote from you. You are blaming women for not being in the kitchen any more, as they were in the 1950s, cooking hot meals. I am shocked that you'd say that and not take responsibility for the cuts that you and your government have made. You talk to the women at Blake-Boulton about what they have had to go through since your welfare cuts, with rent controls going off — their buildings have been sold off — all the things that have happened. You are responsible for those hungry kids, not the mothers who aren't in their own kitchens cooking up a nice hot breakfast any more.

Premier, shame on you. I ask you today to stop playing this stupid shell game, accept the reality that you are hurting poor women and kids in this province and really get out there and do something about it. Shame on you.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Point of order, the member for Timiskaming.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** A point of privilege, Mr Speaker. I want to say to the members of the House that section 21 of the standing orders refers to privilege as those rights enjoyed by the House collectively and, as the members know, by us individually. They're conferred by the Legislative Assembly Act but by other practices and customs, and one of those practices and customs is contained in our standing orders, section 32, where a minister of the crown may make short factual statements, and (e) of that section, where we in the opposition of course are allowed up to five minutes to make responses.

About 20 minutes ago we were handed a media advisory from the Solicitor General and from the Attorney General, that they, with the OPP commissioner, are going to be making a very important announcement, as they say here, concerning illegal gaming and video lotteries at 3:30 right here in the media studio. Those two ministers are here today —

**The Speaker:** Order, member for Timiskaming. It's not a point of privilege.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm conscious of the fact that, as I believe, the Speaker of the House was put in a difficult position yesterday when we came into the House not knowing what the orders of the day would contain and discovered, somewhat unexpectedly, that we would be resuming debate on the very controversial piece of legislation on the introduction of video slot machines in this province, and that in the course of that unexpected debate there was a closure motion moved by the government benches. It was appropriate that there was a finding that that was not due process that afternoon.

I am concerned that the Speaker of the House and the opposition are being put in exactly the same position today, compounded by the issue that my colleague has just raised. We come today and orders of the day are to be announced. We assume that we are going to be resuming the debate on video lottery terminals. We assume, based on yesterday's performance, that there will be a closure motion, and we assume that at about the same time as the closure motion is being moved there will be an announcement of some importance being made a floor below us.

I think there is a real denial of democratic process when at the same time as the government calls for closure on an act which is bringing significant change to the province, they're making an announcement which they describe as being important —

**The Speaker:** With due respect to the leader of the official opposition, that may be conjecture on your part. I don't know. All I can say to the members of the opposition benches is that reviewing the matters before us today, there's nothing out of order. This is not the first time, I think, in this session or in previous sessions, where orders of the day were laid out as to be announced. That's not out of order. And closure motions are always in order, as I understand. So although you may have some concern about this — I'm not suggesting you shouldn't and I'm not suggesting you should — I can



only say to you that nothing today in this day's proceedings is out of order.

**Mrs McLeod:** If I may, I appreciate that. I reviewed the standing orders carefully enough to see if there was any basis on which I could challenge that. I guess my concern is that it's the combination of situations, each of which separately is in order but, taken together, I feel are a true violation of the orders of business of this House.

**The Speaker:** Again, I appreciate your comments, but as I said earlier, there's nothing out of order. Individually or collectively, they're still in order.

Member for Riverdale, you have a point of order?

**Ms Churley:** A different point of order, Mr Speaker. I doubt if you heard this, but when I was up responding to the Premier on his statement today, I heard the member from Brampton North say to me, "Why don't you go home and take care of your own kids?" If you didn't hear that, I would ask the member for Brampton North to stand up and apologize for that sexist remark.

**The Speaker:** The member for Riverdale, I myself did not hear that comment. You have brought it to the attention of the Speaker. I can't ask the member to withdraw specifically because I didn't hear it, but I can ask the member for Brampton North, if he chooses, to stand in his place now, and if he did make the comment, withdraw or do whatever he chooses.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** I withdraw the comment, Mr Speaker.

1410

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Premier, dealing with the situation at Ipperwash Provincial Park. The Premier knows that this is a very tragic event, the first time a native has been killed in a land dispute in the history of Canada. One of our OPP officers is facing serious criminal charges.

Premier, this is about your role in this matter. On May 29, in answer to a question in the House about your knowledge of the buildup of OPP officers at that incident, you said, and I quote: "We knew nothing of any" OPP "buildup. My staff" knew "nothing of any buildup. I was informed of no buildup."

We now know that your member for Lambton, the Conservative member, Mr Marcel Beaubien, was at the police command post on several occasions, including four hours before the shooting took place. We now have had confirmed that he was in constant touch with Mr King in your office. We now understand that he informed Mr King of what was going on there because he thought that was his role. We now know that he sent a fax to you.

Premier, now that you have had a chance to think about your answer on May 29, will you admit that your answer was incorrect?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I don't believe so. We are dealing with a very serious situation, a very tragic situation. I believe the context in which I was asked was, did I know anything of a buildup of police for any operation that was to take place; did I know of anything

that was not able to have been read in the paper; did I know of any information that wasn't on the evening news?

I think if you go back and look at the evening news over the 4th, 5th and 6th — did I know there was a command post? "Of course." Is that normal police? "No, it is not normal to set up a command post." There was what was considered a very serious situation in which command posts were set up. This was on the news as a matter of public record. I can assure you that I have checked and I have no record in my office of any fax. I have asked Mr King if he can recall having learned anything from Mr Beaubien that wasn't already in the public domain, and he replied that no, there was not.

**Mr Phillips:** It's more serious as time goes on. The question to you, Premier, was very clear: "Did you know of a buildup?" You denied that you or your staff knew it. It's also very clear that Mr Beaubien was in constant contact with senior people in your office, and these senior people informed you.

On October 30 I asked you, "Can you confirm that Mr Beaubien talked to either yourself or a member of your staff during those three days leading up to the shooting of the native at Ipperwash?" and can you confirm that what Mr Beaubien said is true, that is, that he sent you written communication? Your answer then was, "Not to the best of my knowledge." Now that you've had a chance to think about it, will you admit that answer was incorrect?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I have not spoken to Mr Beaubien and did not during that period of time, and nothing was expressed to any member of my staff that caused them to relay that information to me.

**Mr Phillips:** Premier, in both cases now, the two questions I asked you, you have once again not been forthcoming. We're at the heart of the matter. For some reason this incident was handled very differently from other incidents with our native communities.

This incident happened two months after you became Premier. The question is right at the heart for you: What role did you play in it? Why did you and your government decide to handle this differently? Did you tell the police to get tough? Did you instruct the police to handle it differently?

The reason I'm posing this is that we have now asked you several questions on this matter, and frankly — I would use stronger language — your answers have not been straightforward. Will you now agree to establish an independent, public inquiry with full authority to look into this matter and to examine the role that you personally played in this whole tragic event?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me say in response to the member's question that I have given all the information that I have been aware of every day, at every instance, and continue to do so, going back to events over a year ago.

Let me also remind the member of the allegations that he makes that following completing of the SIU investigation, Commissioner O'Grady made a public statement indicating quite clearly there was absolutely no political involvement; there was no political direction by government members or by government officials. I have consistently relayed that. The police have consistently relayed that.



Clearly, the member was there to get information; that's been acknowledged. Also, I think the Solicitor General has indicated to you at no time did the member give any direction to any member of the OPP during his visits to find out for his constituents, both native and non-native, what was going on and what information they needed to know. I would suggest to you that if any of you did less on behalf of your constituents, you would not be doing your job.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** I want to indicate that we don't find the Premier's answers acceptable. We'll be pursuing an issue which we feel is serious.

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** I will direct my second question to the Minister of Education and Training. This morning we heard from a group of teachers who are extremely concerned about the impact your cuts are having on students in their classrooms. Those teachers are with us in the gallery today.

They came here because they were deeply concerned about what's happening to their students. They knew that in the past you have discounted every report from teachers, so they went and had an independent study conducted to attempt to assess the impact of your cuts, and they learned some interesting things.

One thing they found that you might be interested in was that teachers are working harder than ever, with 90% of teachers spending many hours after class and on weekends preparing lessons and doing other work-related activities, which might contradict what your friend Mr Paroian had to say last week.

But they found out a lot more. They found that students are finding themselves in larger classes. They found that the dollars for supplies and for textbooks are being cut. In fact, here's one of the textbooks that's being used in our classes, held together with elastics and falling apart. They found that teachers are having to contribute as much as \$350 a year just to provide basic supplies out of their own pockets.

Minister, you seem to have acknowledged that your cuts are indeed hurting students in the classroom. Will you now agree that students cannot afford any more cuts?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. First of all, I had a chance to look at least at the media release this morning from the report the member alludes to. Once again, I'm somewhat surprised to find that apparently the Leader of the Opposition has not in fact read the report to which she refers. If she had, she would find that this in no way contradicts anything I've said in this House.

There is no time when I haven't suggested that teachers work very hard, that their profession is one that's very demanding, and in fact that they spend a good deal of their time outside of the classroom working to make sure they can provide those professional services to their students as best they possibly can. That is not inconsistent with anything I've said, or any report that

has been tabled by this government over the course of our term of being in power, so I'm surprised that the Leader of the Opposition would represent it as such.

**Mrs McLeod:** I was not surprised to hear the teachers we spoke to this morning say how demoralized they are feeling because of the constancy with which this minister and this government discredit everything that is being done by committed teachers in their classrooms on behalf of students. That's the message they are getting from you, Minister, and that is hurting students in the classroom.

But what they are really, really concerned about is not what you have to say about them, not how you discount their work, but what is happening to the students in the classrooms. We talked to the teachers who are here today. Each of them told us what's happening in their particular classroom, where the kids are struggling to learn in classes of 35 kids, where students with special needs are not getting the support they need, where education basics such as librarians and music programs and phys-ed programs are being eliminated because of your cuts.

1420

Minister, the teachers who are here today feel that you are not listening to them, that you're not hearing the legitimate concerns they have for their students. Will you listen to the teachers who have come here today to ask you to hear their stories, or were you going to let the tax cut continue to drive your entire agenda?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I must say that when I read the media release this morning on that report, I was very disturbed to find that a number of teachers in the province still believe that this government is somehow anti-teacher, despite the fact that I have stood in this chamber day after day and said time and time again that the critical decisions in our education system are made at or in or near a classroom, that the professional teachers are the greatest asset of our education system and that one of the reasons we have the potential to have the best education system in the world in Ontario is because of the quality of our professional teachers.

I have said that time and time again in this chamber, and my colleagues, to a person, agree with that and are behind it, so it demoralizes me when I read that that message is not getting out to our teachers in the province, and I would ask the Leader of the Opposition if she would in some way represent this government factually to people and let people know that the minister and this government are in fact behind and in favour of those professional teachers.

**Mrs McLeod:** I have been doing my best for months now to represent this government factually and to get the government to understand the realities that are there. I invite the minister to read more than the press release. I invite him to read the entire report, and he will be even more disturbed. More than that, I join with the teachers who are here today in inviting the minister to come and visit their classrooms. They want you to come and see what is happening out there.

Minister, I don't think you had any understanding of what was happening in classrooms when you began your cuts, and I don't think you have any desire to understand what's happening now. The Minister of Finance needed some money for his budget cuts. He asked you to find



some money and you said, "I can do even more than you're asking me to do." That's the bottom line: how you can take money out of education to pay for your tax cut.

If you want to send a positive message to teachers, to students, to parents, tell them you understand that our education system cannot sustain any more cuts. I ask you to send that message today by answering one simple question. The next time you and your cabinet sit down to talk about the budget cuts the Minister of Finance is going to announce this month, will you stop, do everything in your power to stop the Tory bulldozer from digging any more holes in our education system and hurting students any further?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Let me assure the Leader of the Opposition of this, that I have spent — I've said this in this chamber on many occasions, and it would be useful if the Leader of the Opposition would be factual in her comments about this — I spent last year about 25% of my time in classrooms. I am told by people at the Ministry of Education that is the most amount of time a Minister of Education has spent in a classroom of the previous governments. I intend to continue doing that this year, because I do believe it's important to understand the real concerns and the real-life issues of professional teachers in this province, and so I will continue to make every effort to do that.

But I want to tell the Leader of the Opposition this: I have had conversations with a number of teachers over the course of the last 16 months, and I can tell you that they are teachers because they are committed to the future of their students. They want to prepare those students for what they believe will be a challenging future, and they, like this government, they, like this minister, are unwilling to send a bill for the education to the children. This government won't and the professional teachers don't want us to.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question, leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is also to the Minister of Education, and I'll preface it by telling the minister that 72% of the teachers across this province give you an F. You're still getting Fs.

You made some comments yesterday that I want to ask you about. You said yesterday that your government will not tolerate a lower quality of education in any school, and you said your government is not willing to have second-class students, and yesterday you blamed cuts that are happening on school boards. You said school boards aren't making the right decisions.

I want to ask you today about the Atikokan Roman Catholic Separate School Board, where decisions about funding and about cuts are directly made by you and your ministry. This school year, the ministry cut the staff at St Patricks elementary school by half a teacher. Because operating funds are tied to the number of teachers, \$10,000 was also taken out of operating funds. What this means is that there's only a half-time grade 6 teacher; 11-year-olds in grade 6 have to spend half the day rotating from class to class because there's no grade 6 teacher. The teacher in the classroom says this is not good for the kids. He says it's not good for 11-year-olds. They don't get what they need out of education.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Hampton:** I want to ask the minister —

**The Speaker:** That's fine. It's done. It's up. That's it. I appreciate the fact you haven't asked the question, but you went well beyond the time limit, well beyond it. Minister?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** If the leader of the third party has a question regarding a specific school or a specific decision that's been made by my ministry or any board, I'd be more than happy to take that question under advisement and provide him with an answer.

As to my comments yesterday, I stand by them. The leader of the third party, your party was in power for five years in this province. You had the opportunity, sir, to put together a funding program that would guarantee there would be no second-class students in the province and you failed to do so. This government will not fail to do so.

**Mr Hampton:** Just so you know, Minister, this is an isolate school board. You make the decisions directly on the number of classes, the number of teachers and the operating budgets. You make it; the board doesn't make it. You cut this board. You cut out half a teacher this year. You took \$10,000 out of their operating funds and you're the person who's taking kids who are 11 years old and taking away their full-time teacher. Don't blame it on anybody else. It was your decision. It was a decision that was made this year.

Let me ask you this, Minister: Since these kids don't have a full-time teacher any more and since you're the person who's making that decision, do you now agree that you're hurting children, you're hurting classroom children, you're hurting 11-year-old school children because you're more interested in giving your wealthy corporate friends a phony tax cut than you are interested in kids in the classroom?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I have learned over the course of the last 16 months to take the representations of the leader of the third party in this House with a grain of salt. I would be more than happy to have a look at that situation and provide him with whatever information he requires.

But if anyone has hurt children in this province, the leader of the third party needs to look around him, because you handed the children of this province a \$50-billion debt that this government is charged with reversing.

*Applause.*

**Mr Hampton:** The question was about classroom education. It was about education for children. It's very obvious the minister doesn't want to answer —

**The Speaker:** Order. Government members, please come to order. It's difficult to hear him when you're continuing your applause.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** And opposition members, come to order now.

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau):** Throw them out.

**The Speaker:** Member for Ottawa-Rideau, would you come to order specifically.



**Mr Hampton:** The question was about children in a grade 6 classroom; it was about 11-year-old children. So the minister wants to talk about a tax cut and he wants to talk about debt. Maybe the minister can answer this, because some of the children and some of the teachers from that school are here today: Do you think it's all right that your government gives the president of one of the big banks over \$200,000 in tax breaks while these children lose their teacher? Is that what you're saying is all right?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I know that these words will probably not be understood if they're in fact listened to by the leader of the third party, but I will say them anyway: We are committed to having a high-quality and fair education system so that every student in this province has the opportunity to have a high-quality education, and we will get that done. The third party had an opportunity to do that when they were —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Will the Minister of Finance and the third party House leader come to order, please.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** This government will provide that equality of opportunity for every student in the province. We know there are students who have been hurt in the past because your government would not fix the funding system or the governance system.

More to the point, this government is charged with reversing the record of mismanagement of your government, which includes overtaxation, a higher debt which we are passing on to our young people, less opportunity, a diminished hope. We are restoring hope and opportunity for those young people.

1430

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My second question is for the Premier, and it concerns the fact that the MPP for Lambton is contradicting what the Premier has said in this House on many occasions about events surrounding Ipperwash.

Yesterday the member for Lambton confirmed, as we've discussed earlier here in the House, that he had several conversations with Bill King in your office both before and after the Ipperwash shooting. Mr Beaubien goes on to say that it was back and forth. "I talked to Bill King in the Premier's office on numerous occasions." In fact, Mr Beaubien admitted to discussing Ipperwash with the Premier's office "probably three or four times" during the sensitive period around the time of the shooting.

Premier, do you expect us to believe that Mr King, who works directly for you in your office, your own personal assistant, did not inform you of the issues that Mr Beaubien was raising? Do you expect us to believe your assistant would keep you in the dark?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think if there was anything that was new or was not public or was not already in the nightly news, that may have been relayed to members of my staff, but my recollection, and I talked with Mr King, is that this was not the case.

**Mr Hampton:** We just want to be sure all the information gets out here. Mr Beaubien stated that he recorded

the dates that he contacted your office and he says he's got those records. Mr Beaubien also says that he sent faxes to your office on the Ipperwash situation. Mr Beaubien says that he has copies of these faxes. That's what he told the media yesterday. In fact, Mr Beaubien says they were faxes that apprised the different ministries and the Premier on occasions, relaying concerns.

If this is truly the case, I want to ask you, will you commit to and consent to having the records of Mr Beaubien and the faxes that Mr Beaubien sent to you and to other ministries released? Will you arrange to have those released so the public can be fully informed about what happened at Ipperwash?

**Hon Mr Harris:** The request doesn't sound to me to be unreasonable, save and except a couple of things. The first is that you would know in the matter before us there are criminal, there are civil cases that are there. But subject to whatever authority I have or whatever authority the member has and subject to any legal advice, I have no difficulty with that kind of information being public.

**Mr Hampton:** In his first response, the Premier said that this is all information that's on the TV news. You said in your first response that there's no problem here; the information should be shared. You're the person who's running this province. This is a member of your caucus. I am asking you directly, as the person who runs this province, to ensure that the faxes and the records of phone calls and contacts and communications are made public. That doesn't seem to be too much of a request.

I'm asking you something a little further, though. You see, Premier, what's troubling about this is that the OPP suddenly changed their position on how to deal with matters like Ipperwash. Before you became the government, their position was to negotiate and not to get into a confrontation.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The question.

**Mr Hampton:** We know that when you became the government, suddenly a confrontation occurred. So it's important, Premier, that you allow these records to be seen. It's important that we see these records, because it will inform everybody in Ontario as to what took place at Ipperwash. Will you guarantee that all of these records and faxes will be made public?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I answered the question, that I would seek whatever is there. I have no personal difficulty. I haven't seen them, by the way. I know some came to some of my staff. If there was anything in them that was different, I assume it would have been brought to my attention, and it was not. I'm happy to look into that. I've committed to you to do that and have no difficulty with that.

Let me assure you of this: At no time, confirmed by the OPP, did they receive any direction of any change in policy or how they were to handle situations. I think they have readily confirmed that there is absolutely no change in any of their policy. If you read the statement that was released by Commissioner O'Grady, you would find he indicated it is always — has been, is now and always will be — their operational plan, as they've relayed it to us, to try and deal with these situations peacefully.



## VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My question is for the Premier, the person who's in charge of the government of Ontario, who is responsible ultimately for all the decisions.

Yesterday your government tried to use a legislative bulldozer, the closure motion, the motion that shuts down debate, to ram through the bill that would permit video lottery terminals, or electronic slot machines, in every bar, every restaurant and every neighbourhood in Ontario. You know that this is the most alluring and the most seductive and the most addictive kind of gambling, and you're bringing it to every neighbourhood in this province, sneaking the bill in yesterday afternoon and trying to force it through this House.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for St Catharines, come to order. Government members, please. Go ahead.

**Mr Bradley:** Premier, are you so desperate for the cash to make up for the tax cut which will largely benefit the rich that you are prepared to pay such a terrible and awful price, a price that will be borne largely by the most vulnerable and the most desperate people in our society? Are you, despite widespread opposition in this province, including by members from all parties in this House, still prepared to ram this bill through and put video lottery terminals in every bar, every restaurant and every neighbourhood in Ontario?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I know the House leader could respond to that.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** I'm very happy to respond to this. Indeed there has been considerable debate on Bill 75. At the second reading level there were four and a half hours. In committee, in terms of deputations and debate, there were over 68 hours of debate. Indeed now, at third reading, we've had almost 10.5 hours of debate. I might say there has been considerably more debate on Bill 75 than there was on Bill 8, for example, which authorized casinos in the province of Ontario. There needs to be debate. We've had a considerable amount of debate in terms of committee and House time, over 80 hours in total. Now I think there's a necessity for this House to come to a conclusion on this bill.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Essex-Kent, come to order.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** This is important.

**The Speaker:** I don't need debate with you right now. I just ask you to come to order. Thank you.

**Mr Bradley:** Yesterday the Premier indicated that he was changing his position. Obviously he is getting a lot of heat from not only his own caucus, not only the opposition, but a lot of people in this province. This afternoon the government is scrambling to have a press conference of some kind to provide information even though it has hidden an important report which talks about criminal activity in the gaming area or the gambling area.

1440

If indeed it was your intention not to place these electronic slot machines in every restaurant, every bar and every neighbourhood in Ontario — if that is not your intention — are you prepared to now accept an amendment which would prohibit the placement of these electronic slot machines in every bar, every restaurant and every neighbourhood in Ontario? Are you prepared to accept such an amendment?

**Hon David Johnson:** In my comments I'm not reflecting on your decision, but obviously it's the government position that we have had considerable debate on this issue. Amendments have been considered at the committee level. That's what the whole committee process —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order, the member for London North. Minister of Agriculture, can you come to order, please.

**Hon David Johnson:** We have spent over 83 hours on this bill. We have looked at amendments. The opposition parties had an opportunity to put amendments. Those have been considered through the committee process and we feel that it's time to bring this to order, bring this to a final vote. This bill will allow for the control of VLTs and there will be measures made to enforce police efforts in terms of the illegal machines that are out there today and to protect communities. This government is of the opinion that this will be an improvement over the current situation where there are some 20,000 or more illegal machines in the province of Ontario.

## FIREFIGHTERS

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is to the Solicitor General responsible for public safety in the province. This morning we saw more than 2,000 firefighters on the front lawn of Queen's Park, and some of them are here today from as far away as Timmins and Kirkland Lake. As a group of people who are more concerned with public safety than their own self-interest, they want to know why the Premier and the minister did not keep their promise made during the election to firefighters to consult with the front-line men and women who protect us from fire in this province before bringing in a Fire Safety Act. You didn't do that. You refused to meet with them after the fire marshal's report was in, to have any kind of substantive consultation. You set up the Who Does What committee, which met extensively with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and fire chiefs, but never once consulted front-line people.

We all saw you march in here with representatives of AMO and the management of fire departments to announce your bill. Will you commit to us today that as this bill goes through this process you will guarantee the firefighters of this province public hearings on Bill 84?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I want to say that consultation has been extensive with respect to this legislation and the change —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.



**Hon Mr Runciman:** No government has dealt with this in almost half a century, and we're committed to doing it in the interests of public safety.

I want to say with respect to the allegations made by the member in terms of consultation, my office met on four different occasions — July, two occasions in August, once in September. Certainly I met with Mr Lee and Mr Carpenter after assuming office as well, so I want to indicate that I appreciate the concerns. No one has more respect for front-line firefighters in this province, both full-time and volunteer, than this minister. We're very much cognizant of their concerns. I am indeed supportive of public hearings. We'll have to work this out with the opposition parties and the government House leader, but I am very supportive of public hearings.

**Mrs Boyd:** Let me be very frank. The meetings you held with the representatives of professional firefighters in this province in no way gave them any inkling of what you planned to do: to decimate their collective agreements, to destroy their ability to offer not only fire suppression services but fire protection services, a major part of their job in this province.

You say you personally are in favour of this and that's not what I asked you, because it's fine to be personally in favour of something and to rely on your House leader to say that it's not possible to have public hearings. I'm asking you to guarantee to the firefighters of this province, who are responsible to you as the minister who's responsible for fire protection, that as Bill 84 goes through the process there will be public hearings at which firefighters, municipal councillors and the population that's protected by firefighters across the province can tell you what they think of this bill that you tout as a great step forward in public safety.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Certainly the House leader's office has indicated to me that they are supportive of hearings. These are the kinds of negotiations that take place with all three House leaders. I've indicated my support for public hearings. I've conveyed that to firefighters as well when I've been asked. I want to say that this legislation was developed —

#### *Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Mr Speaker, the original question and the supplementary centred on public hearings. I've indicated my personal feeling that this should occur. I think the House leader's office has indicated support. We understand and appreciate the concerns being expressed by firefighters. We're willing to listen to them during this legislative process and perhaps changes will be forthcoming as a result of that consultation.

### DRINKING AND DRIVING

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Recently the House voted unanimously in support of the principle of Bill 85, a private member's bill in my name which would get tough with drunk drivers who are repeat offenders. My bill requires education and rehabilitation programs for all impaired driving offenders, lengthens the driver licence suspensions for persons convicted a second or third time and permanently revokes the licences of

repeat offenders who are convicted a fourth or subsequent time. Minister, do you support this bill and, if so, can the government commit to passing either my bill or a similar government bill?

1450

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I thank the member for Mississauga South for her question. The government agrees that there is a need for tough sanctions to deal with repeat drinking and driving offenders. This is why the ministry has implemented administrative driver's licence suspension, which will start well before Christmas.

I support Mrs Marland's bill in principle and have asked ministry staff to take a look at her proposal to see how best we can get even tougher on impaired drivers.

Finally, I really like the idea of one-year, three-year and five-year suspensions. I definitely feel that it will send a clear message that this government is going to get tough on drinking and driving.

**Mrs Marland:** On October 24 the Minister of Transportation, the Attorney General and the Solicitor General marked the anniversary of the government's road safety plan. Many initiatives in that plan, including the administrative driver's licence suspension, were passed in Bill 55 and will soon be proclaimed into law. The administrative driver's licence suspension, incidentally, was in my original bill tabled in November 1994.

However, several other measures in the road safety plan have not yet been incorporated into legislation. I ask the Minister of Transportation, does the government plan to introduce additional road safety legislation, and if so, when?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** Thank you once again, to the member for Mississauga South. As set out in the road safety plan, the ministry is looking at requiring drinking and driving offenders to complete some type of remedial measure program before they get their licence back. We expect to make a decision on the appropriate model some time this winter.

This program must be both cost-effective and effective in helping to rehabilitate drivers with a drinking problem so they will no longer pose a threat on our roads.

In answer to her question, we have another road safety bill coming forward this fall but we intend to address specifically drinking and driving again in the spring of 1997.

### FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I have a question for the Solicitor General. Minister, I had the privilege of speaking to thousands of very angry firefighters on the front lawn this morning. They wanted me to pass on to you that they missed you out there, by the way. You were invited. Maybe next time you can catch the rally.

They're angry because you poisoned a potentially very beneficial piece of legislation for fire safety in this province. You've poisoned the bill with labour relations provisions that really are an attack on Ontario firefighters.

The irony of this is that there's not a problem here to fix. Firefighters have never struck. In fact, as you know, they have a code that they will never go on strike.



Why don't you show that you have the trust in and respect for Ontario firefighters we all have and remove that section of the bill?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I've indicated in an earlier question that we are going to have public hearings on this. That's my understanding. The firefighters will have every opportunity to make that case.

With respect to that particular provision, I think when we're talking about public safety, in the interests of public safety it's my view, and they will have the opportunity to convince me otherwise, that it's our responsibility to codify that protection for the public of Ontario.

**Mr Ramsay:** What we're talking about is the firefighters' ability to negotiate how they work in their workplace. That's what this is all about. If you respect them so much and are on their side, as you've said in this House in answer to previous questions, then why would you have put this section in the bill? Instead of that you've attacked the respect and dignity of Ontario firefighters and, through them, all the men and women and children of our province who hold Ontario firefighters in the highest esteem, because we all know that these men and women risk their lives out there for all of us on a daily basis.

Minister, I'm glad you support public hearings. I'm looking forward to participating in those hearings in the upcoming months. But why don't you sit down with the firefighters and negotiate this out of the bill so that we can all get on and support a good bill for fire safety in this province?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I intend to sit down with the firefighters during the hearings process and participate personally as much as I can.

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question of the Minister of Education and Training. Barb Hoddinott, from St Marys school in Trenton, has a grade 8 class of 27 students. One third of them have been identified as needing help with reading, writing and oral language skills. In addition, one of those children plus one other one have behavioural problems that have been ongoing. Another student has a stuttering problem, and as of this year there is no assistance for that student.

Yesterday in this House, the Minister of Education said that "this government will not accept a lower quality of education in any school in the province of Ontario." He said that the funding formula has made second-class students out of special needs students.

Last year, the nine identified students had four periods each week with a resource teacher to give them extra help. This year, as a direct result of your cuts, that has been cut to one half. They only see that teacher every second week.

Minister, do you agree that the students in Barb Hoddinott's class are getting a lower quality of education than they did last year, and isn't this as a direct result of the cuts —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Minister.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I think the honourable member knows, because I know he's familiar with education and I know he's participated in discussions on this subject over the course of the last year, that in fact funding to special needs was not decreased last year. It was in fact slightly increased, and it has been increasing over the course of the last decade or so. So the funding to special needs was not reduced last year, just to be very clear about that.

I did say yesterday, and I'll say again today, that I believe the funding formula for students must address the individual student needs. I think our present formula does not. Our government is committed to changing it. Frankly, I wish the previous government had changed it.

**Mr Wildman:** The minister ignores the fact that in this particular case, one third of the students in this grade 8 class need extra help in this crucial year before they go to high school. They're not getting that help, because the board does not have the funding. They're only getting a little bit compared to what they had last year and 100% of the students in this class are missing out, because this affects the whole class operation.

How on earth can you justify to these students and their teachers why they had to miss out on educational opportunities because of your cuts? When are you going to explain to these students that they should in fact miss these opportunities because of your government's agenda?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Perhaps I'm not speaking slow enough for the honourable member opposite. Special needs funding was not reduced last year. It was in fact increased, and so if the member opposite would like to continue to refer to special needs reductions, there has not been one. I'm surprised that the member opposite does not know that.

Again, to make the point very clear, we believe there needs to be a better funding mechanism in the province of Ontario so that funds spent on education get to the classroom and make a difference with the young people in this province, and this government will do that. Your government, sir, did not.

1500

#### VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** My question is for the Solicitor General. In my riding of Muskoka-Georgian Bay I've received a number of comments and questions concerning the introduction of video lottery terminals in the province. Some of these comments have been supportive of the move, as they're seen as being beneficial to the tourism industry. However, yesterday in my Toronto office I had a constituent from Huntsville visit me, and he raised some valid concerns about VLTs related to law enforcement issues.

Minister, can you tell my constituent what you're doing to ensure that the government is putting sufficient enforcement safeguards in place?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I want to thank the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay for the question. The member is correct. I have said publicly on a number of occasions, as have a number of my colleagues, that the



government is aware of the law enforcement concerns around illegal gaming in Ontario and we take them very seriously.

Both my colleagues and I assured this House more than once that this government is addressing those law enforcement concerns and much more effectively than previous governments. Right now, the Gaming Control Commission, which my colleague the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations is responsible for, has a dedicated staff of 80 law enforcement personnel committed to tackling the problem of illegal gaming.

**Mr Grimmett:** I'm encouraged to hear that information, Minister, but can you provide my constituent with a little more specific information on how these measures will actually deter VLT-related illegal activity?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** In addition to the work that is already being done to combat illegal gaming, my colleagues the Attorney General and the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations and I will be making an important announcement later today detailing a new provincial illegal gaming program aimed at reducing illegal gaming and targeting organized crime involved in operating illegal video lottery terminals.

This government is doing what it promised to do. We have said we would make sure that our communities were effectively protected from illegal gaming activities, and that is precisely what the measures we will be announcing later today will achieve.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** I have an important question for the Minister of Health. The minister knows I attended the Ontario Hospital Association annual general meeting this morning. I spoke with many people: trustees, administrators, doctors, nurses and others who were attending the convention. They told me that our hospitals will not be able to cope with your further cuts of 6% this year and 7% next year to their operating budgets.

As the hospitals across Ontario have struggled to meet the 5% cut for this past year, we have seen as a result nurses laid off, services being moved out of hospitals, services being cut, as well as some administrative savings. But clearly patient care has suffered.

Hospitals have made it very clear that they cannot cope with this government and this minister's budget cuts. My question to the Minister is, will you stop your further cuts that are ill-advised, that are going to hurt patient care, that our hospitals say they cannot cope with? Will you stand up today and announce you will stop this?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** The honourable member is correct; she was there when I spoke to the Ontario Hospital Association this morning. I think we both should have come away with the same message, given that we were at the same meeting. The message I got from the president of the OHA, the executive of the OHA, was, "Get on with restructuring and redouble your efforts to get on with restructuring and give more resources to the commission so that we can get the restructuring done."

The honourable member has a point with respect to hospital budgets and that is they want to get on with restructuring, getting rid of the waste, duplication and overlap, excessive administration. Many people came up to me afterwards, because I thanked those hospitals that went from 14 vice-presidents to five vice-presidents and all the different examples I gave in my remarks. Many of those hospitals came up to me and said: "Thank you for recognizing the restructuring we've done so far. There's more to be done and let's get on with it."

**Mrs Caplan:** That is not what the people were saying this morning. The minister is not listening to the people who run our hospitals. He is not listening to the trustees, the boards of directors. He's not listening to administrators and nurses and doctors and others. Minister, you do not know what is happening out there. They are telling you they cannot cope with further cuts to their hospital budgets, planned cuts for this year and next year.

This morning I was told that not only is patient access and quality suffering, but I was told that by April of this year the wheels of your health care system are going to be falling off your bus.

Minister, in the name of patient care, in the name of sick people across this province, I ask you today, I implore you, will you stop the cuts to the hospital budgets in this province? Will you put patient care ahead of your tax cut, and will you stop the cuts to the hospitals budgets that are hurting people in this province?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I hope the honourable member took the opportunity to state some facts to the members of the OHA she spoke with, because the only ones cutting health care in Ontario are Jean Chrétien and the federal Liberal Party.

The federal Liberal Party is very much in favour of restructuring. The honourable member may want to look at the letters that come out regularly from the Prime Minister and the letters that come out regularly from Mr Dingwall, the health minister, who support the province of Ontario in their restructuring and modernization efforts in the health care system.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Mr Speaker?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. The member for Oriole, if you ask the question, it seems incumbent on you to hear the answer.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Well, you know, with the greatest of respect, the member for Oriole, when you ask the questions, I watch carefully and the minister listens. So if he's going to answer them, I think the same respect is due him. Minister.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Finally, as I went into the room this morning, a story was told to me that Steve Paikin was the guest speaker the day before, and Steve asked the audience there — there were several hundred people in the room; this is at the convention centre — whether the government was on the right track; "doing the right thing" was the actual question. I'm told that 80% of the CEOs, presidents, chairs and hospital volunteers in that room put up their hands and indicated the government was on the right track.



## EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have another question for the Minister of Education and Training. Judy McStravick, who teaches at Pope John Paul II elementary school, is here today. She teaches a grade 5 class. Last year she had 24 students in her class. This year, because of your cuts, she has 35 students in her grade 5 class. Many of her students are reading three or four levels lower than they should be, but because she has so many students, she can't give them the extra help, and the board can't afford to hire more resource teachers, so the children only get a little bit of time with the resource teacher in terms of help with their reading.

Minister, can you explain to Judy McStravick and her grade 5 students how it is that your government can afford a \$5-billion tax gift to the wealthiest people in Ontario but you can't afford to help them in terms of getting the resource teachers they need to learn to read?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** Certainly it would be my pleasure to explain to anyone who is interested why class sizes may have gone up this year versus last year in some circumstances, and that is, because these are set two years out, this is the result of the leader of the third party's social contract. So I'm very happy to explain it.

1510

**Mr Hampton:** Once again the minister doesn't know what he's talking about. There was in fact an enrolment increase at this board of education, but because of your cuts and the way your cuts are impacting, these children can't get the help they need and the school board can't get the money for the teachers they need.

Let me give you another example, since you obviously need some information. In the grade 1 class they have 36 students, and the expectation is that at the end of the year every one of those children should be able to read. The teacher in that class knows that she doesn't have time to help every child who needs extra help. So maybe once again you can explain to the teachers from that school and the grade 1 students from that school how it is your government can afford to give bank presidents in Ontario \$200,000 tax gifts but you don't have any money to help grade 1 children learn how to read. Maybe you can explain that.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I want to acknowledge a good try on behalf of the leader of the third party to get around the fact that the social contract had the effect of increasing class size across the province and in fact that's what schools are dealing with right now.

I can assure you of this: The 1.8% savings target that we have for schools across the province this year is meetable without —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Member for Cochrane North, would you please come to order. Thank you. The member for Kingston and The Islands, you come to order as well. If that's provocation, then you haven't been around here very long, let me tell you. Minister?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. In fact, let me say again that the 1.8% savings that we're looking

for in our school system is attainable without affecting classroom education. We will make sure that happens. It's not only attainable, but it's necessary. It's necessary, sir, because your government raised the debt and raised taxes in this province and diminished the opportunity for the young people, and you have the gall to talk about —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. A fun day was had by all, I see. That's good.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Mr Speaker, get a muzzle. Get a muzzle and a leash.

**The Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon, you're being the least helpful of anyone. If you could come to order, I'd appreciate it. Thank you. Statements? We're way past that; we're at motions. No motions? Petitions.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In light of the fact that the government is holding a press conference momentarily to deal with a very important issue that's before the House, I ask for unanimous consent to revert to ministers' statements so the statements can be made here in this House.

**The Speaker:** The member for Algoma seeks unanimous consent to revert back to ministers' statements. I did hear a no.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I just want to make the observation — and I say it specifically to the government House leader, and I accept your previous ruling. For this assembly to be charged with a very important bill, Bill 75, and to be at the very same time in the very same building knowledgeable of a very related press conference is, if it's not unparliamentary, I have to say through you, Mr Speaker, to the government House leader, discourteous if not contemptuous. All I say as a former government House leader is that in all of my trials and tribulations and misjudgements, if I had ever done something like that to Mike Harris or Ernie Eves, these chandeliers would have been ripped off the roof above me.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the point of privilege. Again, there's nothing out of order. It's just that simple. We're at petitions and the member for Wilson Heights is getting in shape, I can see, so you go first then.

## PETITIONS

## NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;



"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature.

### SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition signed by 115 of my constituents from Hornepayne. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government is planning to make significant changes to the delivery and governance of education in this province; and

"Whereas we as parents believe that school councils should play an important role in education with clearly defined responsibilities limited to their particular school communities; and

"Whereas we as ratepayers are extremely disturbed that consideration is being given to abolish school boards and eliminate decision-making by locally elected representatives;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the present structure of school boards within the province of Ontario continue to have a major role in governance of the schools, to deal with broad policies as advocates for the students in their community, to provide cost-efficient education services and to be directly accountable to the parents and local ratepayers."

I support the petition and affix my name thereto.

### POLICE SERVICES

**Mr Bill Grimm (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** I have a petition which I'm filing today on behalf of the member for Simcoe East signed by one constituent from that riding. It relates to the Police Services Act and a suggested amendment relating to the investigation of complaints. I file that today.

### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I have a further petition signed by residents in my riding. They are concerned with the possibility of eliminating rent control. I wish to read it to the House.

"Whereas the government of Ontario has announced its intention to remove rent control from apartments that become vacant so that landlords can charge whatever rent they want; and

"Whereas the government's proposed law will eliminate rent control from new buildings and allow landlords to pass on repair bills and other costs to tenants; and

"Whereas the government's proposal will make it easier for landlords to demolish buildings and easier to convert apartments to condominiums; and

"Whereas due to the zero vacancy rate in Metro Toronto the removal of rent control will cause extreme hardship for seniors and tenants on fixed incomes and others who cannot afford homes;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario to keep the existing system of rent control."

I concur and will affix my signature to it.

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from the workers of Ontario regarding this government's continuing attack on their rights in health and safety and WCB.

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is attacking workers' compensation benefits and the rights of injured workers; and

"Whereas Tory plans include taking \$15 billion from injured workers and giving \$6 billion to employers, including the government's rich corporate friends; and

"Whereas Cam Jackson, the former Minister without Portfolio with responsibility for gutting the WCB, refused to hold public hearings, choosing to meet secretly with business and insurance industry representatives; and

"Whereas the WCB has about \$7.6 billion in assets and its unfunded liability has been steadily shrinking; and

"Whereas the Jackson report and WCB legislation are just part of a coordinated attack on occupational health and safety protections for working families in Ontario; and

"Whereas Tory plans also include abolition of the internationally respected Occupational Disease Panel; and

"Whereas the government needs to hear the message that taking money from injured workers and lowering incentives for employers to make workplaces safer is not the way to make Ontario a better place to live;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold full, province-wide public hearings on WCB reform; to listen to the voice of the people calling for improved occupational health and safety protection; and to tell the Tory government to call off its attack on the dignity and standard of living of injured workers and their families."

I join these petitioners.

### HEALTH CARE REFORM

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** Mr Speaker, as you know, it is against the rules of the House for cabinet ministers to present petitions. As such, I have a petition from the Minister of Labour signed by a number of her constituents from Waterloo North which reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, protest the unilateral approach of the Harris government with regard to the restructuring of health care in this province. We feel that the measures taken by the health minister, Jim Wilson, are precipitating the rapid decline of the health care system, to the detriment of the residents of Ontario.

"We are particularly concerned with what we perceive to be an impending crisis in the availability of doctors' services. Doctors are leaving this area at a phenomenal rate, and more graduates are going to the United States than are remaining behind. We are left with only one cancer specialist in this region, and the obstetrical services in the Kitchener-Waterloo area have just been withdrawn. We fear further losses of necessary services



such as these if your government persists with its current approach to health care reform.

"We urge this government to negotiate immediately with doctors from all areas of expertise and to listen to their concerns with a view to making the practice of medicine once again a desirable profession in Ontario; to stick to your promises of less government interference by reducing the red tape in which doctors are entangled; and to consider implementing the suggestions of the medical community with regard to cost-effective solutions for health care in this province. Failure to do so will be viewed as a refusal to abide by the wishes of the electorate in this area and will be remembered at the next election."

It's signed by a number of constituents of Waterloo North. I've affixed my name to the petition.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I have a large number of petitions representing over 1,800 people in the city of Elliot Lake. It represents about one in 10 people in Elliot Lake. The petition says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has recommended the closure of two hospitals in Sudbury; and

"Whereas the overall number of available beds will be reduced by approximately 35%; and

"Whereas the reduction in beds will affect Sudbury's ability to remain the referral centre for health care in northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas there will be a large number of layoffs in the health profession, impacting the quality of local health care; and

"Whereas the global annual budget for health care will be reduced by 25% and will affect health care delivery for the region and cause even longer delays for treatment;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to rescind the Health Services Restructuring Commission's recommendation to close two Sudbury hospitals."

I affix my signature. This brings in total over 15,000 signatures to this petition.

### ADJOURNMENT MOTION

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House. In the midst of a crucial debate on electronic slot machines in this province, the Solicitor General —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Welland-Thorold, do you want to get named?

**Mr Kormos:** I move we adjourn.

**The Speaker:** Member, you're going to get named if you don't sit down.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** He moved a motion.

**The Speaker:** I heard him move the motion. There's no debate on the motion.

Mr Kormos has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1523 to 1552.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Would the members take their seats, please.

Pursuant to Mr Kormos's motion to adjourn the House, would all those in favour please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 27; the nays are 54.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** Mr Speaker, I move that we proceed to orders of the day.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Mr Tilson has moved that we proceed to orders of the day. Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There'll be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1554 to 1624.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Will the members take their seats, please.

Mr Tilson has moved we proceed to orders of the day.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 56; the nays are 27.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

ALCOHOL, GAMING AND CHARITY  
FUNDING PUBLIC INTEREST ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 RÉGISSANT LES ALCOOLS,  
LES JEUX ET LE FINANCEMENT  
DES ORGANISMES DE BIENFAISANCE  
DANS L'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for third reading of Bill 75, An Act to regulate alcohol and gaming in the public interest, to fund charities through the responsible management of video lotteries and to amend certain statutes related to alcohol and gaming / *Projet de loi 75, Loi réglementant les alcools et les jeux dans l'intérêt public, prévoyant le financement des organismes de bienfaisance grâce à la gestion responsable des loteries vidéo et modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait aux alcools et aux jeux.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Mrs McLeod, you have the floor.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** I'm conscious of the fact that I only have 11 minutes left to participate in this debate. Of course, there are continuously new pieces of information being added that should be relevant to the debate, so I really wish that I had longer. In fact, as I wound up my remarks yesterday and adjourned the House at 6 o'clock, I had just been expressing my concern with the fact that the government,



whose own criminal intelligence service, a service of the OPP, had a report which —

**The Speaker:** Members, if you're choosing to leave the chamber or have a meeting, then I would appreciate if you do it now — I'll give you a moment — because I'm having great difficulty hearing the member speaking. Otherwise, if you could remain in your seats, I'd appreciate that too.

**Mrs McLeod:** As I was saying, I'd just expressed my concern yesterday about the fact that the report that had been given to this government by its own criminal intelligence service expressed concerns about the involvement of organized crime in gambling and how the introduction of video slot machines and the proliferation of video slot machines in this province would add to the involvement of organized crime, how the government had chosen to suppress that report, ignore that report, ignore the concerns that were being expressed by their own police department.

We now find at 3:30 this afternoon that the government has seen fit to make a very important announcement away from this House, an announcement in which they've indicated that they are going to commit \$8 million to increase policing in order to deal with illegal gambling and I presume the involvement of organized crime in illegal gambling. I for one will welcome the fact that if the government is determined to go ahead with this they will add to the police resources. I don't think \$8 million in four regions is going to be enough to deal with the problems that are going to exist. I wish they would release the report so we could all know the magnitude of the problems which we believe we are going to face if this government moves this legislation. But at least they are acknowledging that there are problems and that they are going to have to add significantly to our police resources to deal with them.

I have some difficulty now, maybe even greater difficulty today than I was having yesterday, if that's possible, with the government's argument that introducing legal slot machines is going to be enough to deal with the illegal slot machines, because I still don't know, even with increased police resources, exactly how the police are going to determine which is an illegal machine and which is a legal machine.

The member for Durham Centre yesterday talked about my own home town riding of Thunder Bay and the fact that there are illegal slot machines operating in my home community. The police chief has indeed told me that. He's also told me how impossible it is for the local police forces, who know of the existence of these illegal machines, to deal with them. They've literally got to be there to see a cash payout before they can know that this is an illegal slot machine. When we have legal slot machines giving the same cash payouts as the illegal slot machines, I can't begin to imagine how many additional police resources would actually be needed in order to determine what's legal and what's illegal, let alone begin to determine what the involvement of organized crime might be.

I don't think that the government really sees this as being the work of the police forces, because they are going to move to have the job of inspecting their new

legalized slot machines, the ones that we expect to see on every street corner, in every bar, in every restaurant in every neighbourhood in the province — they're going to regulate that under a new combined LCBO and gaming commission. I can't begin to imagine how the government expects this will work, because I look at the lack of ability of both provincial and federal governments to even make a dint in smuggling. They're working with the full resources of customs officials, with RCMP, with OPP. This is a problem that occurs along a clearly defined border. If you're ever going to be able to stop something, you should be able to stop something that blatant and that confined, and yet we have not been able to make a dint in it.

1630

I can't begin to imagine how inspectors with the combined responsibilities of liquor regulation enforcement and gambling regulation enforcement are going to be able to make a dint in anything. I add the fact that in the survey we did over the weekend and announced yesterday, the people are not buying the government's line that making video slot machines legal is going to deal with the illegal problem. Two per cent of the people in Ontario have bought their line and clearly people know that this is going to be a problem that increases the incidence of organized crime in the province of Ontario.

But I also have very real concerns, as we all do, about the social problems that are going to be enhanced, increased, the social problems of gambling, because of the impact of video slot machines on gambling. Again, I believe this is an area where the government is ignoring all of the evidence that has been brought forward by not only expert witnesses but indeed by the experience of other jurisdictions. I'm only going to touch on a couple of these in the few moments I have left.

There was a conference in Winnipeg this fall where those who've had the most recent experience came together, a conference on gambling. It confirmed that the bulk of addiction gambling problems are clearly with video gambling. In the province of Manitoba, 84% of the persons who are being treated for compulsive gambling have difficulties with video slot machines. In Alberta, 65% of the people who have problems with compulsive gambling have a problem with VLTs. In Saskatchewan, that percentage is 75%. Don't try and tell us that video slot machines are not going to increase the social problems of compulsive gambling. As has been said over and over again by every expert witness who came to committee, these are indeed the crack cocaine of gambling. They provide an instant gratification at little cost and as they proliferate on every street corner there is going to be an absolutely irresistible temptation that is going to feed more and more compulsive gambling.

It is of particular concern for young people, and I hope the government and the government members have looked at the fact that there is a very striking correlation between age and the use of video slot machines. The Manitoba study pointed out that 25% of identified gamblers started under the age of 18. Another 30% of identified compulsive gamblers were between 18 and 24. When you know that compulsive gambling has its roots in teenagers, in adolescents, and you know that adoles-



cents are the ones who become most quickly involved with and addicted to video slot machines, you know that the impact this will have on young people is going to make for very serious problems in their future lives.

The government has argued that we need to go ahead with this because it would be good for business. I think again here they are ignoring the experience of other jurisdictions, the fact that in Alberta when VLTs were introduced to bars in the hopes that it might stimulate new business, the patrons were still there, but they shifted their spending to the machines from the food and from the alcohol. So it didn't really help the hospitality business; it just shifted it.

The government says: "Don't worry about any of this. Don't worry that VLTs are being used primarily by young people, many of whom become addicted gamblers. We're not going to let kids use the slots." I don't know how they're going to stop it. I don't know how you're going to stop young people from using VLTs when we weren't able to stop young people from getting cigarettes from vending machines. I wonder how the bars are going to want to stop these young people from using the VLTs.

The government says: "Don't worry. We're going to limit this. We're only going to have 20,000 slot machines. The opposition is fearmongering again when they suggest that we are going to have slot machines in every bar, in every restaurant, on every corner of every neighbourhood in the province. Well, we believe that the government is not going to stick to its limit of 20,000. I mean, 20,000 machines sounds horrendous to begin with, as a minimum, but we don't believe that they're going to stay with that as a minimum.

We believe that the government is introducing video slot machines for one reason and one reason only, and that is because they do, indeed, want the big dollars. This is the way they are going to meet their tax cut promise, and it's the only way they think they're going to be able to meet their tax cut promise.

I don't believe that this government is going to find it easy, even if they wanted to limit the machines to 20,000. I think we've already seen how governments of past days can be faced with some very difficult problems, even if they're not engaged in blatant patronage, although certainly something as lucrative as the slot machine business would lead one to be very tempted to want to look for some very clear patronage. I'm natural resources minister from way back. I know we had trouble deciding who was going to get fishing licences. Many years ago, under previous Conservative governments, there were major issues around who got timber licences. Today, every one of us knows that who gets the lottery terminals in their store becomes a big issue in terms of the survival of that store. They will all want them, and it will be impossible for this government to limit it and it will be very tempting for this government to use it as a piece of blatant patronage.

If in fact this government was not looking for a big cash haul from video slot machines, if they don't intend to move to see video slot machines literally in every bar, every restaurant and every corner of every neighbourhood — as we believe is their intent — if the Premier really wants to back off from this, we've provided an

alternative. We're prepared to take them at their word. I know there are members of the opposition party who want to believe the Premier when he says, "It is not our intention to have these proliferated, to increase the compulsive gambling, especially among young people." So it's easy. Let the Premier live up to what he says he intends to do. Let the government accept an amendment to this bill, an amendment which does nothing more than say very clearly that this government is not going to move VLTs into every restaurant, bar, tavern, in every neighbourhood in Ontario. It should be an easy amendment.

Mr Speaker, because I feel so profoundly that this vote should not be taken, because I believe this government wants to introduce closure, I will now move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker:** The leader of the official opposition has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

There will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1638 to 1708.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Order. Would the members take their seats, please.

The Leader of the Opposition has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 25, the nays are 57.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

We will now continue with the debate on Bill 75. We'll move to questions and comments.

**Mr Kormos:** You know, at 3:30 — and this is why it was necessary that the House be adjourned, because there was an important press conference being conducted by the Attorney General and Solicitor General, where they finally acknowledged the huge social cost that VLTs, slots, carry with them. Mr Crozier, Mr Ramsay, Ms Boyd and myself attended there and in fact we discovered — here he is — the Attorney General and the Sol Gen, flanked by OPP officers and Toronto police officers, with an acknowledgement that slot machines carry with them an incredible social and human and community cost, one which we have been telling the government about from day one of the introduction of this bill.

Finally, with knee-jerk, having been forced to acknowledge the difficulties, forced to acknowledge that somebody was lied to when the rationalization was given that it was necessary to introduce 20,000 electronic VLTs to combat the illegal slots — that simply wasn't the case. We were told that was going to overcome, overwhelm, the illegal slots. The acknowledgement in the press conference today was that it's going to take specific resources to the police. That's what the OPP have been telling this government for months. That's what we in the opposition have been telling this government for months.

This government isn't interested in the social disease of gambling addiction. This government isn't interested in the attack that VLTs impose upon working families and upon the poor and upon their children and adoles-



cents who are at high risk for this crack cocaine of gambling, for addiction to VLTs and slots. This government, quite frankly, doesn't even care about the entry that its highly organized legal VLTs are going to create for organized crime in this province. This is an open door to the mob in the province of Ontario. One can only conclude that they're friends of this government because this government is going so far to accommodate them.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** The most interesting thing about having sat on both sides of the House, for those of us who have had that privilege and that opportunity, and also for those of us who still have all our faculties, including our memories, is that we can remember some of the debate from previous legislation in this place. I certainly recall very well sitting on that side of the House and hearing all the arguments that were made by the previous government in favour of legalized gambling, absolutely in favour of legalized gambling.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, order.

**Mrs Marland:** Who was the government that brought in casinos? I ask not only who was the government, but who was the party that supported the government of that day in voting in favour of casinos? To stand in her place, as the leader of the official opposition did yesterday, and express concern about compulsive gambling, having voted in favour of introducing casinos into this province, I'm afraid is a little —

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** All the bars in Mississauga South will have them.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for St Catharines, come to order.

**Mrs Marland:** I don't want to be unparliamentary so I won't use the wrong word, but it's a little difficult for us to understand how you can stand in your place and vote in favour of casinos in this province when these machines in casinos are no different from the arguments you're giving expressing your concern about compulsive gambling. Frankly, if you had as much concern about compulsive gambling, you wouldn't have supported the previous government in favour of casinos.

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I'm pleased for the opportunity to comment. I wish I had more time. I have to seize this opportunity, as I listened to my leader, who made passionate speeches about this awful legislation which you are ramming through without listening to the people or even the opposition. We know that the direction in which this government is going is wrong, but it doesn't matter to this government, which continues to be undemocratic in its approach, to be a bully in most of its legislation, ramming things through.

**Mr Bradley:** They won't accept our amendments.

**Mr Curling:** Yes. We put forward amendments. They said we must be constructive. We did so, and put forward an amendment. They ignored it. I want to know what approach they would like us to take. They are the ones who declared a revolution in this province. Maybe they declare war on the poor, they declare war in the sense of putting all these kinds of terrible machines in this place which are, as you know, the crack cocaine of gambling,

where people are being addicted. It is the poor that they are exploiting, those who think that one of these days the opportunity will come with one stroke of the arm. But it will not be so.

They are looking to pay off a debt, they say, or to give a rebate, as I would say, to the rich. This is not the direction they should go.

First I think they should put their house in order, to be more democratic, listen to the people. We know it's a long time to wait to throw these people out. They have to be thrown out, but at the time, people will be patient. I remember a familiar face like yours, Brian Mulroney, who felt he was bigger than anyone else. He was thrown out so disgracefully, only two of the Tories were left. That will happen to them soon.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** It's quite obvious that yesterday the government was prepared to shut down the debate and ram this legislation through even though a large percentage of the population in this province do not want VLTs, the one-armed bandits, close to the schools, close to the churches, close to every community. I've received hundreds of letters from people within the riding, from Smooth Rock Falls a letter from Claude Theriault. Jacqueline Morvan from Kapuskasing made a presentation in Sudbury. She also wrote me a letter. She's concerned that —

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the members come to order, please. There's too much noise in the House. Come to order.

**Mr Len Wood:** She's concerned that health care and education are being destroyed in this province. All of the benefits in northern Ontario as far as roads — winter maintenance, summer maintenance of the roads — is all being taken out so that they can give a 30% tax break to the wealthiest people in this province. All of the legislation that is being brought in is designed to take money out of the communities, and we're not getting anything in return.

Why bring in 20,000 VLT machines? They say there are 20,000 illegal machines out there now, so we're going to legalize 20,000 machines and we're going to take millions of dollars out of the economy where charitable organizations depend on other means of raising money for their local minor hockey or for all different groups, and yet they don't want it. I've heard no support whatsoever for legalizing 20,000 one-armed bandits in this province, and that's what they are, really. You put the money into them and there's nothing that comes back in return other than you end up with a lot of people being addicted to the machines.

As for the argument that kids won't be able to use the machines, there's no guarantee that children are not going to be able to get close to these machines when they're put in close to the schools right across this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Leader of the Opposition, you may sum up.

**Mrs McLeod:** Let's be very clear about the bottom line in this. This is a bill about introducing video slot machines and about having those proliferate, no matter what the government says, in every bar, in every restaurant, on every street corner in every neighbourhood in this



province. There is nothing whatsoever to limit that kind of proliferation.

This government wants to ram this legislation through. We saw yesterday how badly they want to do this, how badly they want this passed, and how badly they want to do it with as much secrecy as possible. They are not feeling good about this. This is a government that is getting very concerned about the negative public reaction they're getting, very concerned about the opposition from their own backbenchers.

We released a poll yesterday which showed clearly that 62% of Ontarians do not want video slot machines in the bars and restaurants of their neighbourhoods. We have already heard from 56 communities that don't want it. So this government had damage control to do. The Premier said, "Well, we're not really going to put them in every bar and restaurant." We said, "Then bring in an amendment. Show us that you mean you're not going to proliferate these slot machines," and they refused to even consider it.

Then today, wanting to do some damage control, wanting a positive spin on what has become a very bad news story for them, they pulled together a last-minute announcement of increasing police resources. At least, as hurried as that was, they have now acknowledged that there are major problems with illegal gambling and organized crime, and that has been our point all along. Those problems are going to be greater when this bill passes and \$7 million won't help. But Mike Harris, who used to say, "I don't want government to have gambling revenues," has clearly changed his mind. He wants the gambling revenues. He wants the big dollars. He's prepared to ram this through. They are going to do this. They are going to change lives in every community in this province and someone else is going to have to clean up the mess.

1720

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Before we continue with the debate, I want the House to come to order. There is far too much noise and I can't hear anything, and that is on all sides of the House. Thank you. Further debate.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** With the failure of the Solicitor General and the Attorney General to make their announcement here in this House this afternoon, I'm going to inform those in the House who haven't heard about this announcement around the increase in funding and a mandate to police illegal gaming, because I think it's very significant and very important for us to know what has been announced this afternoon and what was said about it.

This House knows very well that the issues around illegal gaming were the excuse, the only excuse, used by this government, by the finance minister when he announced the VLT situation in the budget. He said that because there are 15,000 to 20,000 illegal gambling machines in this province the only way to get that under control — the only way — was to legalize this form of gambling.

Well, very, very interesting that on the very day after this government tried to force closure on this bill, which clearly does not have the support of the majority of

people in this province, clearly, from all of the studies that have been done — the very day after they tried to force closure, the Solicitor General and the Attorney General, flanked by the commissioner of the OPP, by the chief of the Toronto police, by numerous other officers from the OPP, by the head of the forensic science centre, make an announcement that they are giving \$7 million in additional funds to a combined force of the OPP and other police forces, seconded from other police forces, to deal with illegal gaming.

They say they can deal with the 15,000 to 20,000 illegal machines by giving additional money to the police to enforce the gaming laws. This is what the police have been asking for all along. In every discussion that has been held about VLTs with the current government and with the past government, the police said very clearly, "It will cost a good deal of money for us to be able to police VLTs appropriately."

The finance minister gives as the excuse to expand VLTs — and frankly, in this bill, gives the government permission to do that anywhere in the province, anywhere. This is a very permissive bill, as even the Premier admitted on television last night. It is totally permissive. It allows the government of the day to make the decision about where VLTs will be. And all we have is the word of the same Premier who said he would not expand gambling to any community in this province without a referendum.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Did he say that?

**Mrs Boyd:** He said that. Is that what he's done? Absolutely not. He would not accept the amendments that were proposed to this bill that would have bound the government to that promise. Those amendments very clearly said, one of them, that VLTs would not be allowed into any municipal jurisdiction that had said they did not want it through their elected representatives. Another amendment attempted to say, "If you're going to do it, there has to be a specific referendum." The government would not entertain any of those.

The police officers today were very clearly uncomfortable about the issues around legal versus illegal gambling, and no wonder. Officer Moodie, who was quoted several times in the newspaper, and was one of the four officers with the OPP dealing with illegal gaming, has been quoted as saying: "Illegal gaming is not going to be resolved by legalizing gaming. That is not the answer." And we know that was the report that came forward from the intelligence service. It doesn't have anything to do with legalizing gambling. So when he was asked — well, you said the reason you had to have these policing dollars, \$7 million in additional dollars to police illegal gambling, was because of the social cost of VLTs and gambling with VLTs — an admission from the police of all the things that have been said by all the social activist groups, certainly by members of the opposition and the third party in this House, and many, many of those who came in front of the committee as it travelled around this province.

But when Mr Kormos said to him, "Well, what about the social problems caused by legal VLTs?" he obviously was flummoxed and said it wasn't his job to comment on that. His job was to deal with illegalities, as it is. I'm not



blaming the police officer, his job is to deal with things that are against the Criminal Code. The reality is that the problem is the same. The problem is the same with VLTs whether they are legal or illegal. They are highly addictive. Every criminal intelligence service says that VLTs first of all increase the addiction to gambling, which then makes people desperate so it increases crime in many other areas as people try to feed this addiction.

Then we see a situation where legal VLTs have been shown to be a problem for laundering money for organized crime. So we've got two problems. We not only have organized crime dealing with those who have illegal machines, being the dealers, the proprietors, the collectors on illegal machines, we have organized crime being involved with the laundering of money through legal VLTs. A very serious problem and one that the government refuses to admit.

When we look at the situation in this province and we look at the growing reliance over years of governments on the income from gambling, those who are opposed have good reason to be concerned. We were concerned. When we looked at this issue, believe me, this was one of the major things that we looked at, and we looked at what the police said. We gave additional money to Windsor to deal with the policing in that town. We knew that policing was a problem.

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** You didn't give any money for addiction treatment of people.

**Mrs Boyd:** Yes, we did give additional money for addiction treatment as well; not as much as was wanted. But one of the reasons we decided not to go with VLTs was the very clear representation that we got from the addiction services around how much more addictive VLTs were.

The government tries to say we can't say anything about this because we put in one casino so we have no right to talk about VLTs. That's absolute nonsense. We read all the cabinet submissions. We know what that minister knows about the legal problems, the illegal problems, the addiction problems. We said no, and we said no because the police could not guarantee us that machines could be controlled properly, that they could be identified properly. They could not assure us that there was any way to keep young people out. In fact, they gave us example after example of the impossibility of ensuring this, and we were particularly concerned about the whole issue of money laundering through legalized VLTs. That is not new material. That is something we knew and so we said no.

Did we need the revenue? You bet we needed the revenue. We needed the revenue as much as you do. It infuriates us when the finance minister and the Premier try to say we have a spending problem, not a revenue problem,

and then we see you grovelling around, going after these machines that are going to cause untold pain and difficulty for the people of Ontario. What we want you to know is that this nonsense today about putting more money into policing is very nice, but if you had done it in the first place you wouldn't have had the excuse for legalizing these machines.

We say very, very clearly to you that we have every right to be indignant about this decision you're making, every right to see the will of the people expressed in this place very clearly, and every right to try and make you understand that with a couple of changes this would be much more acceptable to people. If people could be sure that this wasn't going to be down the street from their house, across the street from their child's school, that this was going to be very clearly controlled, the way the Premier says in scrums that it will be, that would be one thing, but you have the opportunity of assuring the people of Ontario that this will happen and you're not prepared to do it.

We know this decision around the dollars was made the day after the CISO report was leaked to the press. We know this is yet another attempt of this government to try and put a smokescreen over the dismay of the people of Ontario, to try and say, "Oh, we've met your needs and here we are." If this government had said early in its mandate, in July 1995, when heaven knows it did a great deal of other damage to the province, that it was going to go after illegal gaming machines and cleared up that problem, it would have much more resonance with the people now.

Madam Speaker, as you can tell, I'm having great difficulty speaking and I have quite a bit of time left, so I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for London Centre has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1733 to 1803.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for London Centre has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please stand and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 19 and the nays are 57.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

It now being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned till 10 of the clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1804.*



# CONTENTS

Wednesday 6 November 1996

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Take Our Kids To Work Day

Mr Patten ..... 5071

Mr DeFaria ..... 5071

### Child care

Ms Lankin ..... 5071

### Firefighters

Mr Ramsay ..... 5071

### Ontario Hydro

Mr Laughren ..... 5072

### Project P

Mr Young ..... 5072

### Municipal restructuring

Mr Colle ..... 5072

### Education financing

Mr Marchese ..... 5072

### Remembrance Day

Mr Jim Brown ..... 5073

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### School breakfast program

Mr Harris ..... 5073

Mrs Pupatello ..... 5074

Mrs Caplan ..... 5074

Mr Bradley ..... 5074

Ms Lankin ..... 5074

Ms Churley ..... 5075

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Ipperwash Provincial Park

Mr Phillips ..... 5076

Mr Harris ..... 5076, 5079

Mr Hampton ..... 5079

### Education financing

Mrs McLeod ..... 5077

Mr Snobelen ..... 5077, 5078, 5082  
1508

Mr Hampton ..... 5078, 4084

Mr Wildman ..... 4084

### Video lottery terminals

Mr Bradley ..... 5080

Mr David Johnson ..... 5080

Mr Grimmett ..... 5082

Mr Runciman ..... 5082

### Firefighters

Mrs Boyd ..... 5080

Mr Runciman ..... 5080, 5082

Mr Ramsay ..... 5081

### Drinking and driving

Mrs Marland ..... 5081

Mr Palladini ..... 5081

### Hospital restructuring

Mrs Caplan ..... 5083

Mr Wilson ..... 5083

## PETITIONS

### North York Branson Hospital

Mr Kwinter ..... 5084

### School boards

Mr Wildman ..... 5085

### Police services

Mr Grimmett ..... 5085

### Rent regulation

Mr Sergio ..... 5085

### Workers' compensation

Mr Christopherson ..... 5085

### Health care reform

Mr Amott ..... 5085

### Hospital restructuring

Mr Michael Brown ..... 5086

## THIRD READINGS

### Alcohol, Gaming and Charity

#### Funding Public Interest Act,

#### 1996, Bill 75, *Mr Tsubouchi*

Mrs McLeod ..... 5086, 5089

Mr Kormos ..... 5088

Mrs Marland ..... 5089

Mr Curling ..... 5089

Mr Len Wood ..... 5089

Mrs Boyd ..... 5090

Debate adjourned ..... 5091

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Visitors

The Speaker ..... 5073

### Adjournment motion

Mr Kormos ..... 5086

Negatived ..... 5086

### Order of business

Mr Tilson ..... 5086

Agreed to ..... 5086

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 6 novembre 1996

## TROISIÈME LECTURE

### Loi de 1996 régissant les alcools, les jeux et le financement des organismes de bienfaisance dans l'intérêt public,

projet de loi 75, *M. Tsubouchi*

Débat ajourné ..... 5091



CA 2 311  
X1  
-123



No. 122

N° 122

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 36th Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 7 November 1996**

**Jeudi 7 novembre 1996**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

**Président**  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.





# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 7 November 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 7 novembre 1996

*The House met at 1002.  
Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSURANCE-SANTÉ

Mr Duncan moved second reading of Bill 87, An Act to amend the Health Insurance Act to satisfy the criteria for contribution by the Government of Canada set out in the Canada Health Act / Projet de loi 87, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-santé pour satisfaire aux critères régissant les contributions du gouvernement du Canada et énoncés dans la Loi canadienne sur la santé.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to standing order 96(c)(i), the honourable member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** It's a great privilege to stand today in the House as a private member and introduce this bill, which I have brought forward for a variety of reasons, particularly because my friends opposite in the governing party have said quite clearly in their Common Sense Revolution that they wish to respect the principles of the Canada Health Act and the principles that are entrenched in federal legislation.

In looking at their record in the health care field, it's our desire to ensure and to see that they are serious in their approach to this and that they're prepared to entrench in statute what has been done in other provinces; that is, entrenching those principles of the Canada Health Act that I think all of us support in our own provincial legislation. Let's review for a moment what those principles are, lest anybody forget.

First, accessibility: that our health care system be accessible to all Ontarians without financial or other barriers.

Portability: that this system be accessible not only across the province but across our country.

Comprehensiveness: that a full range of medically necessary hospital and physician services ought to be available.

Universality: accessibility to everyone without barriers.

Finally, that it be publicly administered and publicly funded.

The bill I've presented today will ensure through our own legislation and our own statutes in Ontario that these principles be entrenched. The act ensures that we use the resources that are transferred to us in a way that is consistent with the principles outlined in the Canada

Health Act. We have established a preamble into the Health Insurance Act to incorporate these ideas.

It's our desire to ensure that these principles be adhered to, and we don't trust this government, because this government has set about on a path to undermine the universality of our health care system. We see user fees. We see all kinds of examples in Bill 26 where this government is undermining public accessibility. Yesterday they acknowledged that they are going to cut acute-care hospital beds by at least 20% in this province, with no corresponding reinvestment in community-based services, more than \$1.3 billion cut, a broken promise, a government that cannot show, has not shown and will not show a vision in health care, a government that's afraid to take a stand in health care, a government that wants to do what Ralph Klein did in Alberta and a government that wants to see a system that doesn't work, just like in the United States. Those of us from where we're from understand their agenda.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I'm sorry to interrupt you.

Please respect the person who is addressing the House and you'll have a chance to voice your opinion. In the meantime, I would ask you to refrain from heckling.

**Mr Duncan:** That government doesn't care about health care. They don't care about people. They don't care about seniors. They've implemented user fees, and they said they wouldn't implement user fees. We won't have obstetrical services in this province. Just today the doctors are sitting down to negotiate with a government that they have no trust in, a government that will not be able to guarantee services. We said this would happen when you introduced Bill 26 and you took away the doctors' rights to negotiate a fee schedule. Now the chickens are coming home to roost. This government will pay a heavy price.

They are at the point now where they're confident, unlike Mr O'Toole, who says when he goes home, he gets it all the time from his constituents. He was well reported; doesn't even want to run again. Why? Because the people of this province are speaking up. They're speaking up in Durham and they're speaking up in Toronto. They're speaking up in Red Lake and they're speaking up everywhere. They're saying: "Enough of this nonsense. Enough of this neo-Conservative garbage that's undermining our health care system." They've undermined it, and we are prepared on this side to stand up for those principles and stand firmly and squarely.

It will be interesting to see if they'll vote for this bill. It will be interesting to see if they're prepared to put their legislative authority where their rhetoric is, because they've talked a good game about it right across Ontario



and right in their own election documents. What this bill will do is ensure that no single minister, no single government, by regulation, can further undermine public health care in this country.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** We need this.

**Mr Duncan:** We need this bill because this government won't do that. This government is prepared to step on little people. This government is prepared to implement user fees on seniors, even though they said they wouldn't do it. Remember? "No user fees," page 7 of the Common Sense Revolution. What do we have? We have user fees. That's what this government has done and that's where this government's head is.

This government doesn't understand the concept of public health care. They're not prepared to defend it and we don't trust them to defend it because they've not kept their word and they won't keep their word. Their agenda is driven by the corporate interests and by the interests of the wealthy. They'd rather give a tax cut to the president of a bank than prescription drugs to a poor senior. We say that's wrong, and we'll stand up to them right across this province.

This government, which said in the election that it anticipated the cuts in federal transfers, this government that said that in all of its documents, in all of its propaganda, now says, "Well, we didn't expect these cuts."

1010

This government has no vision of health care. This government has no vision of a future for this province. The people of this province will give them a loud and clear message, just as they did in York South, just as they will in 1999, that this lack of vision, this singular inability to understand what's important, not only to health care but to the psyche of this country and the people of this province, is not good enough. It's not good enough. We in the Liberal Party and we on this side of the House demand that this government fulfil its obligations and protect that system.

I know there are many thoughtful members opposite who support it. I know and believe that they'll have the courage to say: "We can accept these amendments. They're consistent with our own election promises, and they're consistent with what our ministry has been saying." They campaigned on it. They ought not to be afraid to put this into law.

This isn't the first province that would do it if we adopt this. British Columbia has done it. We think that's a good model and that's why we've introduced this bill.

This government, the current government, campaigned on preserving the medicare system we've come to appreciate and cherish in this country. We challenge them today to take this bill and pass it. It's simple, it involves the expenditure of not one cent of government money and in fact it calls upon the federal government to continue transfers to make the system work.

We ask you, we ask the members of the government, to support this bill. Show that you're committed to accessibility. Show that you're committed to portability. Show that you're committed to a comprehensive public health plan that's universal, publicly administered and publicly funded. It creates a preamble in the bill and it restricts the power of any minister or any government to

undermine that. It reaffirms what I think all of us believe: that one of the defining things about our province and our country is our health care system. While we know there are tough choices to be made, and we're prepared to make them, we also know that we don't trust that government to do it. We think that if they don't vote for this bill, they are going to proceed the way their friend Mr Klein in Alberta did. We're prepared to fight them every step of the way.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Duncan:** They laugh and they joke.

**Mr Gravelle:** They don't care.

**Mr Duncan:** They don't care. They don't care about seniors in Nepean. They don't care about what's going to happen to those people who don't have accessibility. They think it's a big joke. It's a shameless situation when a government of Ontario doesn't take our health care system seriously. They've cut \$1.3 billion. Today we see for the first time that they're acknowledging that there will have to be further cuts and that those cuts won't be reinvested anywhere other than in a tax cut that will go to 20% of the people, the wealthiest people in this province.

They're a disgrace. They laugh and they joke. Well, the joke is going to be on you in 1999, because the people of this province will chase you so far out of office you won't know what hit you. Stand up for public health care in this country; stand up for the proper funding of it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Your time has expired. Further debate.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** I certainly intend to support the bill, although I would that it's unclear in that it basically is a motherhood or parenthood statement that we should be following the Canada Health Act. I certainly agree that we should be following the Canada Health Act.

I would prefer that we had a federal government that continued to have national standards. I would prefer that we had a federal government that maintained its transfer payments and didn't just try to win national elections by going around and telling everybody they're going to defend medicare while Paul Martin is pulling billions of dollars out of the health care system and our post-secondary education system, although I certainly agree with the member for Windsor-Walkerville that when the campaign was on in 1995, Mr Harris said very clearly: "No one should complain about the cutbacks in federal transfers. We've accounted for all of this in the Common Sense Revolution. We can deal with all of those cuts. We can still balance the budget. We can still accommodate the tax reduction. We can do all of these things without touching our health care system, without touching classroom education, without bringing in user fees."

The fact of the matter is the Conservative Party, and I emphasize the "Conservative Party," knowing the rules of this place lied to the people of the province, and there's no doubt at all that they did. Look what they have done since they have come to office: They have cut \$1.3 billion out of our health care system, out of hospitals.

The minister has made it pretty clear about what is to happen very soon. He made a statement at the Ontario



Hospital Association the other day that he guaranteed that the \$17.4 billion would be spent on health care.

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am a member of the Conservative Party, and if there is a lie attributed to the Conservative Party, he's attributing it to me and my colleagues. I don't believe that —

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is not a point of order. I heard very clearly what was said. He did not accuse any individual. Please keep on with the debate.

**Mr Cooke:** Mr Speaker, what I would say is that the member has obviously made the connection. If he wants to speak again to make the connection, I would appreciate that.

Let's go back to what the government had said about things like user fees.

**Mr Preston:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker —

**Mr Cooke:** Come on, Mr Speaker. Stop the clock and take it out of the Conservatives' time.

**Mr Preston:** He has now said that this member has made the connection, so he has identified me right here with the lie.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please. You are pushing it a bit too far.

**Mr Cooke:** They're very sensitive over there, aren't they, Mr Speaker, very, very sensitive about these things? Can you imagine how sensitive they're going to be after they come back after the one week in their constituencies and they start hearing from their constituents about the cuts to health care, the hospitals that are closing from one end of this province to the other end, the user fees they've brought in for seniors and low-income Ontarians when the Conservative Party promised they would not bring in any user fees? It's very clear, and I say it again, that by making the promise that there would be no new user fees, the Conservative Party lied to the people of this province and won the election on that basis.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Cooke:** I said the "Conservative Party."

**The Deputy Speaker:** I know. At the same time, they're the type of words that really arouse the ire of everyone. There are so many good words in the English dictionary and, knowing you, you won't have any difficulty to do it.

**Mr Cooke:** I wouldn't want to hold the Conservatives clearly accountable; I would just say that the people of this province know what kind of line they were given in the last election and they're beginning to realize very clearly that the government was not very honest with them in the last election. The Conservative Party went out of its way to try to reassure people that there would be no cuts to classroom education, no cuts to health care, and that's not what has happened: \$1.3 billion worth of cuts to hospitals.

Dr Sinclair, the head of the hospital restructuring commission, when he was before the standing committee on estimates a couple of weeks ago, said: "There is no relationship between the \$1.3 billion worth of hospital cuts and the restructuring commission. Those cuts are separate from the restructuring process; they're not as a result of the restructuring." In fact, he made it fairly clear that if he had his way he would not want those cuts to be

put in place; he'd rather see the savings come through rational restructuring of the system and then achieve the savings as you restructure it and then reinvest. That's not happening. Those cuts have been made. We can see already the impact on increased waiting lists for necessary surgery and increasing problems of accessibility to our hospitals across the province.

The Ontario drug benefit program is obviously the clearest example. The government and the Conservative Party played very fast and loose with their words in that campaign. They said there were going to be no new user fees, and everybody who read that promise understood that they meant no new user fees, period, when it came to health. Then they form a government. They bring in the copayments, they bring in some other basic fees to the drug benefit program, and they say, "What we meant to say was that there are no user fees where the Canada Health Act applies, and the Canada Health Act does not apply to the Ontario drug benefit program."

**1020**

The ordinary person, the senior, who read that commitment that there would be no user fees feels absolutely betrayed by this government. There is no piece of legislation that we can pass in this House amending the Health Insurance Act to overcome that problem and that betrayal of the public trust that the government has implemented since the 1995 election, but I think it's important for us to go on record here today, all of us, to say that we still believe, we have a common belief in this Legislature, in a universal health care plan and that no government should betray that common belief that everyone in this province shares.

In fact, Mr Speaker, I think you would agree that the people of this province have two basic services that there is a complete consensus need to be protected because they're what make this province a great place to live: our public education system and our public health system. Both of those systems that we are all so proud of, that were built by red Tories and now that we have Reformers in power are being torn about, we have all paid dearly over the years, and people say in poll after poll: "We would rather protect public education and protect our universal health insurance and our hospitals and community-based programs. We'd rather maintain higher levels of taxation than see those services eroded."

I think that's one of the reasons we now see a decrease in support for the Conservative Party, because people are seeing that those two fundamental services in this province are being eroded in a very substantial way. Ministers can get up day after day in question period and think they're being cute, that they're getting away with it, by saying: "No, you're wrong. There's no impact on classroom education, and if there is an impact on classroom education, it's the fault of the chair of the public board in Peel, Beryl Ford," — card-carrying Conservative, who believed that there wouldn't be any cuts in classroom education — "it's her fault. The fact that there's been \$400 million at this point cut out of the public education system, which is 8% of the provincial funding, has nothing to do with it. It has to do with those incompetent trustees, and if they speak out, we'll get even with them. We'll get rid of them all."



That's what the government is up to now. They're looking at options to eliminate school boards, when I remember when I was Minister of Education and we talked about a reduction in the number of school boards, the folks over here in the Conservative Party were saying: "That's all wrong. You shouldn't be reducing them. These are things that should be decided at the local level, not by some big central government in Toronto."

Boy, how things have changed. I give the spin doctors in the Conservative Party full marks. This government has been able to break promise after promise when it comes to health and education. They've been able to break promise after promise, and the spin doctors have been able to give the impression, when they're doing these things, that there has been no change in policy, no change in direction, that they're delivering on everything.

I think the fundamental mistake backbenchers in the Conservative Party caucus are going to make is to honestly believe the debates that take place in this place in question period, the answers their ministers give. They all applaud and they all show enthusiasm for those answers, they actually believe that's a reflection of public opinion and that if they do well in question period they're doing well across the province.

As a former cabinet minister, let me assure the Conservatives that we learned the hard way and they're about to learn the hard way as well. What happens in this place is almost irrelevant — I'm talking in terms of debate — to what is happening out there. People out there are worried about their health care system.

I am appalled to hear that the Minister of Health — he made an absolute commitment to the people of my home community that the restructuring proposals that have gone through in our hospital system, the work that the community has put into that, and the workers in the hospital system, the boards at the hospitals, the labour community, the business community and consumers, seniors and others, all were part of that, we were told that when the restructuring commission was set up Windsor was exempt because we had gone through the restructuring process, that we were at the point of implementation. Now we're told in the scrum yesterday by Dr Sinclair, the head of the restructuring commission, that they're going to go back into Windsor. They're going to go back and do the whole thing all over again.

If I was a CEO of a hospital or if I was a hospital board chair today, after reading that in the paper, I'd say: "We're stopping implementation today. We're reversing the implementation. We're not going to be part of this sham that we worked so hard to develop a consensus on and then we're going to have the Conservative government come back in and say, 'No, we're going to cut even more beds out; we're going to cut even more dollars out of your system,' and somehow say that the community has bought into it." They've turned it into a complete farce and the commitment of the minister is meaningless. It's not worth the paper that it was written on.

I think more and more communities and individuals are understanding that the Conservative Party never bought into a universal health insurance program. Let us remember that when the federal government brought in universal health, following the lead from Saskatchewan and

Tommy Douglas, the Conservative government here in Ontario resisted. They did not want to be part of the universal health insurance plan. Premier Robarts at the time said he didn't want any part of it, that he didn't believe in a universal health insurance program. They were brought in kicking and screaming because the people of the province believe in a universal health insurance program. They believe in it absolutely. Any government that betrays them on that commitment is going to pay a dear price, and they should.

Sure, we hear from the Conservatives that taxes are too high in Ontario, although if you actually look at real comparisons between the cost of doing business, we're not out of line with other jurisdictions. But I know Michigan rather well and I know that when an auto worker in Michigan or in Dearborn takes a look at what their take-home pay is, and the worker in Windsor takes a look at his, the worker in Michigan may not have as much taken off for tax but he's got a big deduction for health insurance and the company's got a big expenditure for health insurance. Over here it's a universal plan. We all care about one another. We all take care of one another. That's the difference in our society. Over there it's survival of the fittest, it's individualism. Over here we have a philosophy of social responsibility, of community.

The people of this province will not allow Premier Mike Harris and the Conservative government, the Reform government of this province, to destroy that community, destroy what we have fought for for many, many years.

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** I'm pleased to enter the debate today because I find the topic just a little ironic. First of all, we're talking about the Canada Health Act and I intend to go into the details of the Canada Health Act so everyone will know exactly what it says. But I want to start by reminding you that the federal government and the cohorts of the people who are bringing this bill forward today — their federal cousins, if you will — continue to cut dollars to health care in Ontario —

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Nepean, it's your own member who's talking.

**Mrs Johns:** — to such a substantial point that the taxpayers of Ontario continue to pay more. We listen to the NDP, who talk about this Canada Health Act and how important it is, and they of course broke the Canada Health Act in their time by taking away the portability requirement within the Canada Health Act. So the irony of this situation today amazes me.

1030

Let me talk about the Canada Health Act. What happened initially was the federal government believed that there should be health care throughout Canada, that we needed to have a health care system that allowed everyone in Canada to be able to have health care. At that time, lo and behold, the federal government said, "We'll pay half of it." Because they didn't have the ability to implement the system, because it was not part of their initial regulations or abilities, the province had to implement the system and carry it forward.

Initially the federal government started to pay half of all the health care in Ontario and in all provinces. Then



the pot got just a little too dear for them so they moved to an established program funding system which allowed them to make transfer payments to us. When that happened, a number of the provinces said: "Wait a minute. This doesn't make sense. Why are they telling us what to do and not putting the money forward for the system?" So provinces such as Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC said, "No way we're going to follow this system," and here starts the beginning of the Canada Health Act.

With the Canada Health Act what was required was that we believe and we follow through with five different criteria. The first one is there has to be public administration. Really what that means and what is happening with our government is there has to be management of the system because there are considerable dollars tied up in health care systems in all of the provinces. So there has to be a managed system.

Secondly, the plan has to be comprehensive. The health insurance plan must ensure that all services that are medically necessary are provided. It refers to a minimum basket of services. When we talk about the minimum basket of services, I think it's very important to know what they talked about as these medically necessary services. Services are defined in a broad way:

(1) Hospital services that are medically necessary for the purpose of maintaining health, preventing disease or diagnosing or treating an injury, illness or disability, including accommodations and meals, physicians' and nursing services, drugs, all medical surgical equipment and supplies;

(2) Any medically required services rendered by a medical practitioner; and

(3) Any medically required surgical dental procedures which can only be properly carried out in a hospital.

Those were the services that the Canada Health Act said had to be provided.

The third thing they were talking about was universality, that all residents must have access to health care.

The fourth one is portability, and here's where the NDP decided that they would fall. Here's what they said: "We're not going to provide coverage for people who are outside of the province or outside of the country." They reduced that. When the Conservatives ran for power in the last election, we said there's no way we're going to be in violation of the Canada Health Act. Since that time, this government has restored Ontario's position within the Canada Health Act, a very important segment, as the NDP has stood here today sanctimoniously and said, "We believe in the Canada Health Act," and they were the people who moved us out of the Canada Health Act —

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** How did we do that?

**Mrs Johns:** By not allowing coverage outside of Canada.

The fifth decision was accessibility, and there has to be reasonable and uniform access to insured services, fees and financial barriers. So those are the things that we have to do in this province.

The Liberals over here are saying to us that we have to tie into the Canada Health Act, and we're saying we are doing everything within the Canada Health Act and

we're doing more. We want you to know that we're the government who's doing more.

Let's look at the federal Liberal track record. As a result of successive federal reductions in the established program financing, the federal contributions to Ontario's health care expenditures declined from a high of 52% in 1979-80 to 32% in 1995-96. Those are your federal cousins who are cutting the money and the people in Ontario are having to make that up through their tax dollars. That's why we're at one third of our tax dollars going to pay for health right now. So it's outrageous to listen to these people try and tell us that we're not taking care of the Canada Health Act, that we're undermining the system. That's just not true and it's outrageous behaviour.

I've told you about the Canada Health Act and I've told you about how the transfers from the federal government have been cut. I also want to suggest one more important item that I think the people watching the TV need to know today, because obviously the members on the other side aren't interested: When the Liberals ran in the last election what they said was they would maintain health spending at \$17 billion.

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** They would have cut health care.

**Mrs Johns:** They would have cut it to \$17 billion — thank you very much. What we have said is we would maintain it at the same level as when we came into power, which was \$17.4 billion, and at the end of the first year —

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have difficulty understanding how you can respond to a speech when you don't even listen to it. I ask you to refrain from heckling and give a chance to the member for Huron.

**Mrs Johns:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. At the end of the first year in office we've spent \$17.7 billion, \$700,000 more than the Liberals would have spent if they were in power, \$300,000 more than the previous government had spent, and everybody's saying that we're not making reinvestments into health care. Maybe nobody knows how to add and subtract in this House.

Let me tell you about the reinvestments that are happening with this government: \$170 million more into long-term health care. That's not even part of the Canada Health Act. We don't have to do that as a province. We do that because we believe that health care is important, and this side has made a strong financial commitment to ensure that's happened.

We have changed the way that long-term health care is delivered within the province of Ontario. We believe it will be better through our community care access centres. We've increased the dialysis in the communities. We've reduced the cardiac waiting list. All of these things take money. They just don't happen over there. You have to put more staff on, you have to have more rooms available. All of these things take money, and this government is reinvesting.

The Canada Health Act is safe with the Tories in power in Ontario. It's getting stronger, health care's getting stronger. It's a better system than it ever was and will continue to be a better system because of the way



we're reinvesting in health care, the way we're helping to make sure that health care is available to every citizen, and to ensure that the Canada Health Act stays strong.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to join the debate on what I suspect will be one of the pivotal issues in the next three to four years.

The first thing I'd say is that I remember when the federal budget came out and the federal government announced its spending plans to the provinces. Mike Harris said: "We applaud the cuts. We like the cuts. We are in favour of the cuts that the federal government made." That's what Mike Harris said. He loved the cuts. In fact, he's told the federal government they didn't go far enough.

I just make that point because you are on record. You, Mike Harris, are on record saying the cuts are just great and that you frankly wished they had been deeper. So Ontario lost its moral authority at that time to argue against them.

The points I want to make on health care are that I know where you're heading. What you're heading for is you are going to cut the health services that are provided to the citizens of this province through their taxes, and you are going to increase the number of services that people have to go out and buy themselves. And there is no question that you are in favour of a two-tiered health system.

**Mrs Johns:** That's just not true.

**Mr Phillips:** Well, the member says it's not true. The people listening to this should recognize that everything you are doing in health care is designed to get people to pay for it out of their own pockets and not fund it through general revenues. The problem is that the people in this province who can't afford to buy out of their own pockets are going to suffer — and the member says it's not true.

Firstly, what did you do on the drug benefit plan? What you did on the drug benefit plan is you said when you ran you would not have user fees. The first thing you did on the drug benefit plan was to put user fees on drugs for the seniors of this province. You promised you wouldn't do that. So what we find are the seniors in this province, instead of their drug benefits being paid out of the taxes that they've paid for over these years, now they've got to reach in their own pockets and they've got to pay for it out of their own pockets.

1040

What did we find when we saw the Ontario Medical Association agreement that the Minister of Health is negotiating on behalf of the people of this province? What we see is that the government says to the doctors: "We are not going to put any more money in there. That money is frozen because we've got to fund our tax cut." So the doctors of this province don't expect a penny more for five years from the taxpayers of this province. That money is frozen. "We are not going to put a penny more into that fund. Now, however, doctors, we're prepared to find ways that we can make people pay directly, and that is called delisting services."

In other words, we have an insurance plan right now that provides medical services for the people of this province out of that insurance plan. It's paid for from tax

revenue. That's OHIP, that insurance plan. What Jim Wilson did on behalf of all the people who own that insurance plan was to say to the doctors, "We are going to find a way that you can get some more revenue, because what we'll do is, things that used to be paid out of that insurance plan we'll make people pay for out of their own pockets."

For the doctors — and I understand this — they say: "You're only going to provide \$3.8 billion. How can we get more money? We'll get more money by letting you charge people directly for services." So there's another level of second tier.

The third one is — and make no mistake, the hospitals in this province are in a crisis situation. Why? Because they are being forced to restructure with one key ingredient, and that is, the government has said, "We are going to cut 20% of our spending from hospitals." That's the starting point. The health restructuring commission was told that. That's what's driving this: not what's in the best interests of the patients of this province, but they're told, "The hospitals of this province are going to get 20% less money from the insurance plan of this province."

As my colleague said, why is that? Well, it is because you want to give the wealthiest people in this province a huge tax break. So the seniors and all of those people who for years and years have paid their taxes to build a system of health care that they expected would be available, you are now dismantling. Why? To fund the \$5-billion tax cut.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Phillips:** The member over there says the federal government. Mike Harris told the federal government he loves the cuts, "Cut deeper."

What you're going to find is that as this proceeds, people are going to realize that you are gutting the health system in this province to fund your tax cut.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I certainly appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak on the bill that's been put forward by our colleague from Windsor-Walkerville. It's certainly an important opportunity to talk about our party's support for the Canada Health Act.

As my colleague from Huron capably stated earlier, we are indeed committed to ensuring that the principles of the Canada Health Act are not violated. As one of the few provinces in the country in full compliance with the act, this fact is obvious, and we've made the correction of non-compliance brought in by the previous government.

However, I would like to address some of our concerns with this particular bill. Section 2 of the bill presents some difficulty for our government. It would not allow Ontario to determine services that are deemed medically necessary. This determination would be made by the federal government, and with their reduction to us under the Canada health and social transfer of more than \$2 billion, I do not believe they have a right to dictate which services are medically necessary. It is imperative that we retain this determination.

This proposal would suggest that there are unlimited quantities of money out there to be spent, as the Liberals have in the past. You and your party have accused us of reducing health care spending when in fact it went from



\$17.4 billion to \$17.7 billion. I think you can understand that's a \$300-million increase. I suggest you talk to your friends in Ottawa, your Liberal cousins, the 98 or 99, about the reduction of that \$2 billion.

Sections 3 and 4 of the bill would prevent our government from setting the fee code at nil. This indeed is an important concept for quality patient care in Ontario. Having a zero fee code allows us to monitor the types of services being provided to patients while physicians are being paid under an alternative payment plan.

For example, there are some 70 rural and small hospitals that qualify for the \$70-per-hour sessional fee to cover emergency rooms during the evenings and on weekends. Allowing us to set the fee code at zero for those shifts allows us to monitor the types of out-of-hours services that physicians are providing, allowing them to be paid on the flat fee of \$70 per hour. This is an important element in our drive to modernize the health care system. If we did not have this ability, we would be prevented from implementing new and innovative plans for physicians.

As we've said time and again, the status quo is not acceptable. The Toronto Star, your paper, in a recent edition said that over the last 10 years the actual costs of health care have gone up 45%, corrected for inflation and corrected for population increase. What we're headed for is a cabinet of one, being the Minister of Health, who would be the Premier.

We need flexibility to ensure quality patient care in all parts of the province. Setting the fee for a service at nil is also important for small communities that need to offer incentive programs to entice physicians to their communities. For example, we have announced community-sponsored contracts where the physician is paid a base salary of up to \$194,000 to provide a continuum of care. The program also allows completion bonuses of \$10,000 and 37 paid days off for vacation and continuing medical education programs. This is an innovative program to entice physicians to small northern communities. It almost makes one consider going back to medical school, with that kind of an offer.

Section 5 of the bill stipulates that regulations passed under the Health Insurance Act must be in compliance with the Canada Health Act. The Health Insurance Act already has a requirement that regulations passed relating to the definition of "medically necessary" and the payment for those medically necessary services must not contravene the Canada Health Act. It's already being done.

Our party is a firm believer in local people making local decisions. What is good for the people of Toronto may not be good for the people of Northumberland or Ottawa or northern Ontario. The same is true for the different levels of government. We do not need the federal government deciding what is appropriate for the people of Ontario.

There have been many comments made about copayment fees here this morning. You don't seem to understand that the Ontario drug benefit program is separate from the Canada Health Act, and therefore copayment is very much in order, and our fees for pharmaceuticals are far lower than those in any other province in Canada.

You don't seem to understand in spending that the cost of the Ontario drug benefit program went up three times since 1985, from \$400 million to \$1.2 billion. It would seem that cost is no objective whatsoever.

I'm really quite disappointed in the member for Windsor-Walkerville that he wouldn't stay in the House during the debate. He had to leave the House and come back in. He has paid no attention to the debate whatsoever. I really don't know if he's going to get anything — maybe he'll read Hansard afterwards.

I'm really disappointed that this individual would take this opportunity as a leadership candidate and use this forum to extend his bid to flaunt his far-left ideology. Seriously, I wish you well in your bid, but I sympathize with the NDP, because once you win the leadership, there will be no room left whatsoever for the NDP. You'll be so far left you'll wipe the NDP right out. The poor member for Windsor-Riverside won't have a hope in running, because you will be so far left there will be no NDP left whatsoever. But I do wish you well in your bid.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time has expired. The member for Sudbury, I ask you to refrain from heckling and give an opportunity to the members who are interested in delivering a speech to do so in the proper way.

**1050**

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** I am very pleased to have an opportunity to speak to my colleague's bill that he is introducing today. The members opposite will know that the number designated for when your private member's bill comes up was assigned right after June 8, the election, clearly nothing to do with the leadership campaign. You should take the opportunity today, when you have a chance to discuss and ensure that the Canada Health Act will remain intact in the province of Ontario, to discuss the issue at hand, and I would like to address that.

What this government has done is created the biggest joke on the Ontarian people that we have ever seen since this government came into power, and especially in the area of health care. I will tell you, coming from a community of Windsor and Essex county, I have seen the havoc this government has wreaked on my community.

We want to talk about ensuring that the Canada Health Act remains intact in Ontario, and you today have the power to do this. Very simply put, if you have a look at Bill 87, we want to see today how you will vote, the parliamentary assistant to the minister, and I want to see how the Minister of Health is going to vote on this bill today, because there is not one item in this bill that any Conservative member could possibly complain about. In fact, it enshrines the Canada Health Act in legislation in the Parliament of Ontario. That should be of concern to you all. If you choose to do the political thing and simply vote against this bill for the politics of it, I can tell you, you are dead wrong. I would suggest that you seriously consider the contents of this bill, which will not cost Ontario taxpayers a dime and simply ensures that what you say will in fact happen as we prepare health care for the future of Ontarians.

I must tell you that from the beginning when you came into power, you said one thing but you did another, and



health care was the biggest of all. In my community, we had been well on our way in a restructuring plan for years. In fact, the Minister of Health stood in this House and said that we must use Windsor as the example in restructuring, that we must look to Windsor and show the rest of Ontario how to restructure with local decision-making. Instead, yesterday the head of the restructuring commission said that the commission is coming to Windsor.

All I have to say to the Minister of Health is, get out of my town. My town went through restructuring once before. My town has already had significant cuts in health care. We are already suffering. As you well know, we don't have doctors available to deliver babies. What are you doing to the people of Essex county?

I will say once again, I expect you to fully support this bill when we go to a vote, and I would like to say to the people involved with the Ministry of Health, stay out of my town.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I want to commend the member on bringing forward this timely initiative this morning. I think it's extremely important when the issue of health care is being discussed that we ensure we have a health care system which we can be justifiably proud of and which will continue to serve us well.

Americans look to us, except those on the extreme right in the United States, as having a very good health care system. Canadians, regardless of their political background, have traditionally spoken favourably of our system. The reason is that all of the political parties have had a chance over the years to establish and to build up on this system, a system that is fair to all in our society.

No Conservative candidate that I can recall during the election campaign talked about closing any hospitals. I listened carefully, as I do, and I heard nobody talk about closing any hospitals, and yet I hear today that this government is going around the province closing hospitals: three out of five in Thunder Bay, two out of three in Sudbury, and they're on the march across the province.

I can tell you that if they want to close hospitals in St Catharines, they'll have no acquiescence from me on this. I believe the General Hospital, the Hotel Dieu Hospital and the Shaver Hospital, along with the Niagara Peninsula Rehabilitation Centre, provide an outstanding service to the people in our community and are essential, particularly in a community where the average age is higher than it is in other municipalities. If one reads the book *Boom, Bust and Echo*, which is top on the list now, you will see that the author is talking about the need for these facilities as our population ages, as those people who were part of the baby boom need more and more of those services.

What's happening, unfortunately, is that the government is using intimidation, and so you've got crackpot realism, as I would refer to it, setting in. That is, there are people there who believe if the government is going to do something more drastic, I guess we at the local level better do something. In other words, they'd better amputate their foot because if the government comes along, they'll amputate the whole leg. The government has been successful in this intimidation. People who

know better are being silent and are making statements that simply cannot be substantiated.

You can't lay off hundreds of workers in the hospitals and tell people you're going to provide the same kind of service you did before. Just ask people who have been in the hospital recently and have been in the hospital, say, 10 years ago what the difference is in service provided. You simply don't have the staff today to be able to look after people the way you once did. That's not what the people of this province want. Liberals, Conservatives, New Democrats and those with no political affiliation don't want that to happen. That's why I think it's important for the backbenchers in the government to remind the Minister of Health and the person who is ultimately responsible, the Premier of this province, who really runs the province, of that.

We are already seeing an erosion of the system. We have seen user fees. Despite the fact that the Conservative Party said there would be no user fees, there are hundreds and thousands of people now paying user fees with the drug plan. We're seeing a delisting of service. That is, you remove certain services and people have to pay for them themselves. That's okay if you're rich, that's okay if you're in the privileged classes, but for people who are struggling to make it out there, people who have other obligations or senior citizens on a fixed income, that's mighty difficult.

Why are you doing it? It's being done because of the tax break. I know that was part of the platform and I know that you would have to borrow about \$13 billion — in other words, borrow money to give people a tax break. That message was getting through, and so the government said: "We can't do that. I guess that message is getting through; it's true. Let's cut even deeper into the services we provide, including health care services." As a result, we're seeing the consequences for our health care system. So keep in mind that it is not Jim Wilson, it is not John Snobelen, it is not David Tsubouchi; it is Mike Harris, the Premier of this province, who is ultimately responsible. The others can be scapegoated — they have to say what they have to say — but ultimately it is the Premier who makes these decisions.

We need standards that are national standards only because there are provincial governments which will erode them. There are provincial governments which will delist. There are provincial governments which will allow privatization. None in my view are acceptable to the majority of people of this province. I know the Reform Party — and the leader is here today in Toronto — has advocated this and there may be many people in the Conservative caucus at Queen's Park who are admirers of the Reform Party leader. But I'm telling you, if you want to look at one issue where regardless of the person's political background they believe we should have a strong and a good system, I think you'll find that it is the issue of medical care in this province. Individual members of the caucus know that and individual citizens know that and the Conservative Party of years gone by can be proud that it was in power when the Ontario hospital insurance plan was put into effect. Liberals and New Democrats who have governed since then have been part of that system and improved that system from time to time.



So I urge the members of this House to vote for this particular initiative this morning. If you do not vote for it, it's a clear signal that you're simply taking orders from the Premier and the Premier's staff rather than from the constituents you represent.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Windsor-Walkerville, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr Duncan:** It's been a good opportunity, I think, to discuss a very important principle, and that is the principle of our universal health care system.

One of the members raised the question, is this all about leadership? You're darn right it's all about leadership. It's about leadership to provide the kind of health care we've come to know in this province, a system not without problems and a system that needs reform, but one that we have to be prepared to accept and endorse the principles of.

A number of government members have raised some substantive issues around sections of the bill and how they impact, and suffice it to say we in the opposition would be happy to discuss those sections in committee if we pass this bill on second reading.

1100

Voting in favour of this bill is about endorsing the health care system, the principles of the health care system that we have come to appreciate. It is about reaffirming the principles of universality, portability, accessibility. It is about saying that as we make tough decisions in the health care sector we will not undermine the principles that all of us support.

It's the intention of the opposition to see if the members in the government support those principles. It's a very clear bill. It's a very simple bill. It enshrines in Ontario statutes those principles which are present in the Canada Health Act.

I urge the members of the government to vote in favour of this and I urge them to incorporate into our statutes those principles, because the people of this province don't trust you in health care. They're worried about it. They see a diminution of their services. They see hospitals closing. They see a commission that's going across the province and there's a great deal of anxiety and nervousness. I suggest to the government that if you're serious about protecting our health care system you'll vote in favour of this bill and enshrine those principles in the Health Insurance Act.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time allotted for the first ballot item has expired.

#### MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr Bob Wood moved private member's notice of motion number 31:

That in the opinion of this House, the Legislature supports the principle of the people being able to vote on provincial and municipal issues at every municipal election, with questions, in the case of provincial issues, being placed on a province-wide ballot by petition of the people or by resolution of the Legislature and with questions, in the case of municipal issues, being placed on a municipality-wide ballot by petition of the people or by resolution of the municipal council.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to standing order 96(c)(i), the member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Bob Wood (London South):** As members will note, this resolution provides for non-binding provincial and municipal referendums at municipal elections. The questions can come from the Legislature itself in the case of provincial issues, from the municipal council in the case of municipal issues, or by petition of the people.

I would like to note that there is no extra cost to the taxpayer in this proposal as the municipal elections are of course going to be held every three years. I'd also like to note that I believe our Constitution requires that the Legislature cannot be bound by these resolutions or by proposed laws that are put on the ballot. I think our Constitution is right on that. I think the Legislature has to make the final decisions but it's important that the people have direct input to what we're doing.

I'd like to suggest to you that in this day and age the people are ready to do this. We have never had people who are more informed about provincial and municipal issues and we've never had a group of people who are more anxious to have a direct say.

It's a practice that is used by many other jurisdictions, by other provinces, by our friends to the south, by many countries in Europe and elsewhere. Good ideas come from the people. Where laws are enacted directly by the people, they are rarely changed by legislatures later. The idea of referendums is not new in Ontario. It has provided a successful policy with respect to liquor for 30 or 40 years and also on many other municipal issues.

Equally importantly, perhaps, direct democracy provides a check on arbitrary government. The parliamentary system, in my opinion, is as good a democratic system as there is in the world, but it's also important that there be democratic checks on any democratically elected government.

In our system we have parliamentary checks, we have the media, we have interest groups, we have the civil service, we have the courts, but I would suggest to you that it's also important that the people themselves have an opportunity to send their message directly to their government.

I invite all MPPs to support this resolution. I think it will involve more people and more ideas in our democratic process, and it will achieve a better result for all. This is an idea whose time has come. It will give us a better democratic system. We can indeed trust the people on this issue.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I'm somewhat confused by this resolution, because it's my understanding that municipalities at municipal elections certainly have this power already to do this, and, as a matter of fact, many have done so in the past. They've dealt not only with provincial and local issues but quite often they've dealt with international issues as well. I can remember back in the 1980s there were a number of municipalities that had resolutions that dealt with nuclear-free zones and things along that line. I don't know exactly where this is coming from other than the fact that it must be related somehow to the discussion paper that



was put out by the government a couple of months ago that dealt with the whole referendum process.

There are a couple of comments I'd like to make on this, though. Number one is this notion that there are no extra costs involved. I think any municipal clerk will tell you that whenever you put an extra ballot on at election time, it will cost money. To simply say that there are no extra costs involved is not correct. It's obviously not going to be as costly as if you set up a separate election just to deal with a specific referendum item, but there are extra costs involved. It's got to be clearly set out that if it's a provincial question that's being asked on a provincial issue, then the province ought to pick up the costs and not the local municipalities. I'm sure that can be confirmed by just asking the local clerks about that.

Number two is that if a government is responsive, then it should already be reacting to the various petitions that are presented on almost a daily basis in the House here. Some 15 minutes a day are being spent each and every day that the Legislature sits with petitions being presented to the House on a wide variety of issues, provincial issues mainly, issues that affect people on a direct basis, on a day-to-day basis. What happens to these petitions? From a practical viewpoint, usually about three or four months later a form letter comes out from the ministry involved saying that it is already doing this, that or the other thing. I think that to a certain extent these petitions are being totally ignored.

Why doesn't the government come out with a statement on a monthly basis as to precisely what it's doing about the petitions or whether or not it agrees with the issues of those petitions? That's certainly not being done.

The other issue I'd like to raise is this whole principle that people are able to vote on provincial- and municipal-wide issues. This is already the case now, so I don't quite understand why this is being brought forward here today. One of the reasons may be that sometimes these referendums are used in order to bring more people out at local elections. We all know that the turnout for local elections in Ontario is anywhere between about 30% to 50%. There's always this feeling that if you put a question on the ballot that people are interested in, you will get greater participation. I think studies have shown, certainly over the last 10 or 15 years, that this is not always the case, that the turnout doesn't improve as a result of the kind of questions that are being asked.

It's very interesting that in the letter this member has sent along with his resolution he talks about the fact that it would be a powerful tool for groups opposed to government policies, where they could muster the support of the majority of the people. I suggest to you that this is already happening in a number of different areas. I suppose one could say that in the education area right now the educators in Ontario by and large, the various teacher groups etc, would certainly not like what the province is doing with respect to education and the quality of education in this province currently. Is this not a case where they should be able to bring forward a resolution or a referendum?

The other area, I suppose, where it's hurting people on a day-to-day basis deals with the hospital closures that are taking place in the various communities right now. Is

this member suggesting that a local community could still do something about it, even though municipal elections are not to be held until October or November of next year when, in a lot of cases, the various hospitals in the various communities, such as Thunder Bay and Sudbury and some of the other communities that the restructuring commission is going through, have already been closed? It's kind of after the fact.

1110

The other thing I find interesting is that this resolution flies in the face of what we have often heard here over the last year and a half or so. We have heard over and over again, whenever one of these major issues has arisen, that a referendum has already been held, and that referendum took place on June 8 last year. The government was elected on a certain platform. It regards it as a referendum to do a whole bunch of things that it has actually done and which have affected public services in Ontario over the last 16 to 18 months or so, and no referendum is required. A referendum has already taken place; it takes place once every four years when a provincial election is being held.

Well, I say you can't have it both ways. You can't on some issues say, "The people of Ontario have decided at provincial election time how they feel about certain issues," and yet come up with a bill or a resolution like this that we somehow allow people to state their choice again at referendums during municipal election times.

If we want to be consistent on referendums, if we want to be consistent on the whole notion of democratic representation, we cannot on some issues say the people somehow gave us that authority and power to do it during the last election when they elected a majority government and on the other hand say, if they don't like what's going on, let them bring a referendum forward at municipal election times.

The other thing, of course, that's very interesting and that's a problem we have here in Ontario is that the last three majority governments that we've had in the province have basically been elected by a minority of the people in the province of Ontario. I think the popular vote for the three parties that were elected into power over the last three governments has ranged anywhere from 36% to 45%, well below the 50% minimum that is required for a pure majority government. It would be a lot more meaningful if we started taking a look at representational government in this province whereby the will of the majority of the people, whereby the will on a proportional basis of the people out there is represented here in the Legislature so that we don't get these vast swings from one extreme to the other on the minority opinion that is being expressed at any provincial election.

I don't think this resolution adds anything at all to the process, and certainly before I as an individual member can support this, I would like the member to explain the whole purpose of this resolution better than he's done so far.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I'm pleased to join the debate on this resolution. In speaking directly to what is contained in this resolution, I want to raise some questions and points as well.



First, the resolution speaks about the fact that the Legislature supports the principle of the people being able to vote. There's obviously no force to this kind of resolution other than we as a group here or as legislators support the principle of the idea that's being put forth.

Second, the member mentioned there is no extra cost to this, and by that presumably he means there is no extra cost to the province, but as the previous speaker indicated, there are definite costs attached to this when municipalities are engaged in putting a resolution on a ballot, which they then have to administratively deal with.

The third point that is a bit unclear to me is that it speaks about a "ballot by petition of the people." I'm not clear what that means. A petition of 20 people? Is it a petition of 50, 100 or more? That's not quite clear, so the member might want to speak to that when he has an opportunity to speak to this again.

I don't disagree when he says that there are many people who are well informed in society. I happen to agree with that. I also don't disagree that there are many good ideas that come from people, as indeed there are many good ideas that come from legislators here in this place. But to simply say that everyone out there is very well informed and to simply say, in a reductionist way as he does, that good ideas come from the people, and therefore if that is the case, we are almost redundant here and we simply need to go to them for everything, that is a problem. To make that the basis for a referendum is in my view not a very reasonable position to take.

I happen to agree with the previous member when he speaks about the government proposing many different things. When it suits them, they say, "We have had the best referendum in the province when they elected us so we can do basically what we want," which is the way they're dealing with the public of Ontario. There is a great deal of tyranny that comes with governing, and when they say this, when they say, "We've had our referendum and people have elected us," they're saying, "We now have carte blanche to do what we want." On the other hand they then say referendum is also good. I think what they mean by this is: "We will do polling, we will find out what the majority of the public wants on a particular issue, and then we'll give them the referendum." If the polling reveals on a particular matter that the government is not going to be looked upon very favourably, it won't have the referendum. That's the way I think they will govern on this issue of referendum.

This resolution has very little effect, in fact. I think it alludes to the white paper on referendums, and we'll be dealing with that, I suspect, in the near future. That's basically what this resolution does here today.

But I find, generally speaking, on this resolution, on referendum in general — I find referendum in general a problem. I'm not sure it deals with democracy in the way that we would all be pleased by democracy. Is democracy achieved when 51% of the population says, "This is what we want." If that's the case, we're just going to do it, in spite of the fact that 49% of the public says, "That's not what we want"? What we accomplish by this type of referendum where we encourage people to say yes or no — because I'm not sure people are genuinely engaged in the debate, so when they simply say yes or no to a

particular question, is this the kind of democracy you want to achieve? I'm not certain that's what you want, because what you're encouraging in that particular instance through that kind of referendum is a tyranny of the majority with very little protection for the minority.

Democracy is not achieved in that way where there is no genuine debate. I'm one who supports a great deal of genuine debate happening in society. I like a public that is highly politicized, but I'm not convinced we have a public that is highly politicized out there. I'm not convinced that we have politicians in here who are very well informed on many of the issues, and so I am worried about our legislators as much as I'm worried about many of the public not being well-informed of the issues.

But if we really want to achieve a greater deal of politicization of the public and having them more informed, we might begin with the educational system and encourage greater critical thinking and encourage that by making sure the funding is there and not cutting it as you, government, are doing. I would encourage greater funding of literacy programs and continuing education for all people, for adults in particular, because that might lead to greater literacy levels and being better informed in society. I wouldn't cut back on those types of programs.

But generally speaking, you're not achieving democracy, as it is being suggested certainly through this resolution or generally through referendum, so I won't be supporting the resolution.

1120

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to participate in this very important discussion of a very important issue, and I commend the member for London South for bringing this to the attention of the House.

As you know, I am a member of the Legislative Assembly committee reviewing a government publication called *Your Ontario, Your Choice: A Preliminary Look at the Referendum Alternative*. I will be supporting the honourable member's motion because I think it is an additional step along the way to a resolution by this Legislature of this most important issue.

For at least 200 years of the history of elected legislatures, the principle has been that the representatives who are elected in the Legislature have better power, better authority, better knowledge, better expertise to make decisions on behalf of the people. That is the essence of representative democracy. Sometimes that hasn't been the case. I'm reminded of a former Lieutenant Governor in the colony of Upper Canada who referred to members of the Upper Canadian Legislature as knights of the cross. He referred to them that way because none of them could sign their names, they always had to use an X to sign their names; they were not very literate people in those days, so they only knew how to sign their name as a cross, hence the epithet "knights of the cross."

I would be so bold as to suggest that we've come a long way since the knights of the cross, that members of this place are highly literate and highly numerate and are able to conduct the affairs of the province in a better way. Having said that, though, the essence and the truth of the matter is that — may I be so bold as to suggest that we are no smarter, no more numerate and no more



literate than the constituents we purport to represent. That is a great change in the history of representative democracy. It is a sea change in the principle of representation of the people.

There is no good reason why people who are concerned enough about issues as to cast ballots on those issues and who certainly do so with regularity in municipal and provincial elections — why those very same enfranchised people should not have more of a direct say in certain prescribed circumstances on the affairs that affect them directly. That is the principle of the referendum.

The idea is not, as the honourable member for Fort York suggests, to trample on minority rights. As the honourable member should know, any referendum that we seek to make binding on the Legislature of Ontario is subject to the same laws as every other law of this chamber. That means it is subject to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Dominion of Canada and it is subject to the Human Rights Code of Ontario, which affects Ontarians in this province.

I would be so bold as to suggest that this idea that there's going to be a tyranny of the majority through referendums is no greater, and I would argue is less of a possibility, if people have a direct say. We have had times in this place where all three parties have agreed on a contentious public policy issue. There has been not one dissenter on a number of very important issues in the history of this place. While the idea of unanimity sometimes is comforting, it does not allow persons who might not be of the view of every member of this Legislature to have their opportunity to have a say. The referendum is not here to replace this institution. It will be here to act as a further check, a further balance, a further opportunity for persons who are as knowledgeable as everyone in this chamber to have their say on an issue of public importance.

I think that strengthens this place. I think one of the problems that we face as legislators — and I'm trying to speak as non-partisan as I can possibly be — is an issue of credibility and legitimacy that governments over the past 10 to 15 years representing the government of Ontario have tried to grapple with. I commend all parties for trying to grapple with this issue. How can we be a legitimate democratic place that represents the will of the people? No easy answers.

I suggest to the members who are present that perhaps if people had more of a direct say and it is understood that their views are going to count, number one, that increases the legitimacy and credibility of the political system and, number two, those people who have a direct say are going to take that very seriously. I have every faith and confidence in the people of Ontario that if they are assured of a direct say, of a meaningful say, they will take that say very, very seriously. As exhibit A, I would point to the Charlottetown referendum on the Charlottetown accord in 1992, where millions of Canadians read the accord, took part in the referendum process, read all of the material that was available to them, or a lot of it, had very interesting questions that they asked community leaders and asked members of legislatures and parliaments. I'm sure those who were in this place in 1992 had a lot of learned discussions with

their constituents about the ins and outs of the Charlottetown accord. There was a prime example that when the people had a direct say, they took that say very seriously. That was a ballot that was cast in a very serious manner by the people of Ontario and the people of Canada.

In summing up, I would say this. In Canada there is a history of referendums — national, provincial and municipal — although as my friend from Kingston and The Islands mentioned, there have been municipal referendums but they have only been binding in very specific cases to do with temperance matters, for instance, or Hydro matters or fluoridation of water matters. So there are only very limited cases where they have been binding. All the rest has been more in the form of a plebescite, which is to gain some idea of what the public thinks of an issue.

We have had experiences at all three levels of government with referendums. This is not an alien concept. But what I would suggest to you, in supporting this particular resolution, is that we have an opportunity as a chamber to push that further along, to say it is not only governments who decide what the issue is before the people of Ontario or the people in a particular region or municipality, that through citizen-initiated referendums — and my friend from Fort York was wondering why there was that reference. It was a reference to citizens initiating through a well-defined process, I would expect, a referendum question on a ballot.

Through that mechanism, we can have a further check and balance on this Legislature and we can allow the people a direct say on issues that they feel are important — not what the political class thinks is important, not what the media think is important, maybe not even what your neighbour thinks is important, but what you as a collectivity on a petition of a certain minimum number of people in Ontario think is an important public policy issue. You can ensure that is an issue that is discussed very seriously by the people of Ontario and put on either a municipal or provincial ballot.

I think that is a very exciting proposal. I commend the member for London South for bringing it to our attention, just as we have discussed it at the Legislative Assembly committee over the last few months. Quite apart from some of the concerns that are raised by representatives in this Legislature, it will make Ontario a stronger democracy, a more accountable democracy, and ultimately allow for government for the people of Ontario. And that, I thought, was what this chamber was all about.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I want to commend the member for London South for putting this resolution before the House. I should just read it to remind members what we're talking about.

It says, "...the Legislature supports the principle of the people being able to vote on provincial and municipal issues at every municipal election, with questions, in the case of provincial issues, being placed on a province-wide ballot by petition of the people or by resolution of the Legislature and with questions, in the case of municipal issues, being placed on a municipality-wide ballot by petition of the people or by resolution of the municipal council."



This is a very interesting one. I think quite frankly most of this could be done right today. I'm not really clear why it's necessary to be bringing this resolution forward. Consulting the people can never be wrong, so referenda can't be a wrong thing to do.

But I have some cautions. I look south of the border, the home of the referendum, and I look at all the referenda that we saw voted upon just this last Tuesday. In the home of the free and the brave, what did we find? We found that in the United States in a presidential election, where you had the opportunity to vote for President, in most states you had the opportunity to vote for Governor, in a third of the states you had the opportunity to vote for a senator, you had your House of Representatives, you were voting for local assembly men or Congress, whatever you call your state government level, you were voting for dogcatcher, you were voting for virtually every office you could conceivably think of, and on top of that we had referenda questions, a whole slew, depending on states, and many of them were quite interesting, out of all that effort to get the people to vote, less than 50% of the people of the United States who were qualified to vote actually came out to vote.

1130

What I'm suggesting here is that the questions on the ballot do not necessarily provoke interest in an election. What provokes interest in an election is electors being able to believe that their vote means something, that their vote makes a difference.

We look at our experience in this Legislature, and our voter turnouts just for a provincial election run around 65% to 70% if my memory is correct, and in a federal election we're higher than that. In other words, the Canadian electorate, the electorate of Ontario, is far more engaged in the process than we see south of the border. I would suggest to you that one of the reasons for that is that our parliamentary system reflects what people think at least slightly better than the republican system of the United States.

So when you look at referenda questions which can be placed, and are placed, on municipal ballots, you would say to yourself, that's interesting, but I'm not sure, with in some places municipal turnouts of 30% or 35%, extremely low turnouts, whether when you looked at the result you would think that was a result that reflected the people's point of view, merely because the number of electors who have shown interest is a remarkably small percentage of the people of this province or municipality who choose to vote.

We have to think about this. I have no opposition to the idea of having referenda, but in terms of gauging the public mood, they are not necessarily something that will do that and reflect the view of the public entirely. It might be a useful tool, and in that case, why not? I don't have a problem with that. But the idea that is implicit in this resolution is that we politicians, whether we're federal politicians, provincial, municipal or at the school board level, don't know what's going on out there. I suggest to you that's not the case. I suggest to you that the parliamentary system we have had in this nation works extremely well vis-à-vis what happens in republican organizations of government, and that while advice

is always helpful, it is not necessarily a great thing all the time.

The second thing I think we all know — we're sophisticated or supposed to be sophisticated politicians or at least public servants, and we know that you can get the answer you want to almost any question depending on how it's written. Witness the Quebec situation. It was not a clear-cut question. It was framed by a province which wanted a particular answer. They framed the question so they could do everything in their power to get a particular answer, and they came within 1% or 2% of getting the answer they required.

So my question would be, who in the final analysis gets to decide the question that's asked about a particular issue and how it's framed? I think that's an important concern. Do we go down to Mr Gallup or Insight Canada or Environics and get them to frame a neutral question? Even they, the experts in the field, don't necessarily get it right all the time.

We have questions on influencing votes in referenda by the way the question is framed. We have questions about whether the electorate actually cares enough about a particular issue to come and vote on it. We have a number of questions. That doesn't mean we're opposed; it just means they're not the be-all and end-all.

I want to thank you, Mr Speaker, for providing me with this opportunity to speak to this matter.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I'm going to just speak for a couple of minutes on this resolution and let my colleague from Hamilton Centre say a few words as well.

I have very mixed feelings about referendum, for some of the reasons my colleague from Fort York mentioned earlier. It has its upsides and it's certainly got its downsides, and my colleague from Fort York mentioned some of the downsides.

What I want to speak specifically to here and now is that I frankly am concerned about and question the sincerity, not necessarily of this member but of this government when it talks about referendum, and I'll tell you why. I am the critic for environment and energy and for women's issues. Particularly around the Ontario Hydro issue, this government talked for quite some time about the possibility of privatizing Hydro. Granted, they seem to have backed off that for the time being, because polls show actually that people across the province do not support the privatization of Hydro.

In the early days when this issue became public, we asked the government, and the Power Workers' Union asked the government, if it would consider a referendum on this question of privatization of Hydro. We could not get an affirmative answer to that. I would say, if I were to support referendum, that is certainly one issue that I would wholeheartedly support it on, because the public Hydro as we know it today was actually brought in by a public referendum. I find it extremely peculiar that this government, on such a huge issue and one that could have such a big impact on the people of Ontario, would not agree to a referendum around that very important issue.

The same thing is happening now, possibly, with the privatization of our water, which is very worrisome. We



have not even been given an affirmative answer on public hearings should the government proceed on privatizing water in Ontario. I find that a government that is talking about making massive changes to the province of Ontario and won't even hold public hearings on it — I am very suspicious of a government, then, that says it would like to do referendum. That just gets me to believing that there would be picking and choosing about what would be on a referendum. If it's something they want to do and they think they will put it out and lose it, they won't do it.

I would like to see this government open up its process more before I would trust it and its actual reasoning behind referendum. I would like to see more decisions being made in the public, not in secret, behind closed doors, as I see happening with changes in the Ministry of Environment and Energy. Even the Environmental Commissioner came out and said she was very concerned about a lot of decisions being made in secret. You hear that time and time again from my colleague from Hamilton Centre, the critic for labour: too many decisions being made behind closed doors. We had the firefighters down here yesterday saying they weren't consulted properly about that bill. You could talk about practically any bill. Go back to the infamous Bill 26, the omnibus bill. It just goes on and on. It seems as though we're at odds here.

I don't question the sincerity of the member on his resolution today. I'm talking about the Mike Harris government and the decisions cabinet is making. Frankly, I believe and I see that the backbenchers don't have a lot of say in those decisions either.

I am not going to support this resolution today, not only because I question the implications and the sincerity overall from this cabinet, this government, but also, if I were to support a resolution on referendum, I would like a lot more details today on what it means, how it would be conducted, who and how the decisions for a referendum would be made and how many signatures you'd need on a petition. There are lots of things that I would be very worried about showing up on a petition when it comes to protecting the minorities in our communities.

On that note, I will have to say to the member, with regret, today that I have too many problems with this resolution in its present form and with the whole concept of referendum in general and in particular coming from this government.

1140

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** I rise in the House today as a supporter of direct democracy in this resolution. I believe voters in this province should have more control over the legislative process and have the right to offer referendum questions and have the right to vote on these questions.

Our political system is built on the premise of "one person, one vote," yet somehow over the years voters feel more and more distant from the process. Their voice is heard at election time, and then they are silenced for three or four years. How could we have let this happen? What we have to do is make government accountable again. We must rescue policymaking from the lobbyists, special interest groups and bureaucrats and give it back

to the voters. Taxpayers must have a stake in the process rather than simply being the ones who pay the bills. I strongly believe there is a direct relation between the alienation voters feel and the rise in the size and strength of the bureaucracy of this province. There are costs in holding a referendum, but they are cheap compared to the costs of an uncontrolled bureaucracy.

Our government is here to serve, to be responsive, not to coerce and control. Taxpayers believe their politicians control everything, but that's not always the case. In Ontario, 130 politicians representing the people are pitted against 70,000 or 80,000 bureaucrats. It's an unfair fight. If we had more referenda, the 70,000 or 80,000 bureaucrats would have no chance against the desires of 10 million Ontarians. That's a much fairer fight. Taxpayers blame politicians, but the bureaucrats set up the politicians, withhold information, control the agenda, define the problem, the options and oftentimes the solution. I believe the time has come to let the taxpayers, the men and women who pay our salaries, define the problem, control the agenda, give us options and the solutions.

The bureaucrats don't want this system changed. Versed in years of experience in controlling elected representatives, the last thing the bureaucrat wants is accountability. The last thing they want is to face the daunting task of trying to control the wishes of 10 million people.

While direct democracy may be a foreign concept in Ontario, the principle of "one person, one vote" governs the free enterprise system that most of us in this House hold dear. The market economy has an almost instantaneous voting system. The market economy is a dynamic system that changes each moment. It is a summation of all the votes of the participants expressed in dollars. The market system allows the merits, needs and beliefs of those who choose to participate to be expressed. Ultimately, no one controls the market for long. All are equal, and all who participate live by the results.

The marketplace is the purest form of democracy. Consumers purchase the products and services they want from the company that offers the best quality and price. The company that has a clear vision and accommodates its customers will thrive. Governments should be no different.

Just as I believe in the wisdom of the consumer to make their own decisions in the marketplace, so too do I believe in the intelligence of voters to make the important decisions about how they should be governed. Direct democracy referenda are attempts to allow voters, the little guy, to control the money he entrusts to governmental bureaucracy; the little guy, who wants a handle on his hard-earned tax dollar, wants to vote on how it's spent all the time.

Governmental bureaucracy does not want private sector voting mechanisms. They prefer to focus on their own brand of accounting. They use their own language. Lobbyists talk to them. They focus blame on politicians. They carry out their own agendas. Why would they want voting on a more regular basis? Why would they want intervention into their vested interest world?

The private sector works out how votes are recorded through devices such as the stock market or the small



businessman's bank balance. The private sector is accountable through standardized accounting procedures and the ultimate that cash in exceeds cash out.

We must remove regulations and strip away the veneer that limits the democratic market system in government. We must then communicate simply, effectively and in a timely manner so that taxpayers can vote for issues and expenditures. There must be a philosophical underpinning, and that is that the little guy who pays his taxes must have a say.

None of us should ever lose sight of the fact that we are only here in this chamber because our constituents put us here. They want their voices to be heard. I urge you all to join me in giving them that voice. I urge more referenda and more participatory democracy in this technological world where direct democracy is not only possible but practical.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I appreciate the opportunity to join the debate. The first thing I would like to point out is that I don't think it's at all coincidence that the parties in this province, certainly in this Legislature, and across the country that are promoting the idea of more and more referenda happen to be the more right-wing ideological parties in Canada. Reform thinks this is a terrific idea; Manning has embraced it as best he can. Now, of course, the Harris Reform-a-Tories have embraced it strongly. If you listen to Newt Gingrich and those of the right wing down in the States, they're pushing for it. I don't think that's a coincidence and so I would suggest to people who are reviewing in their own mind whether this is a good thing or not, take a look at where it's coming from first and ask yourselves whether or not those parties reflect the important priorities you and your family have.

To that degree I would also suggest, with respect but I'm making a point, that the author of this resolution tends to be known in many circles as one of even the more right-wing among that whole right-wing crowd, so I'm not surprised that he would want to be seen championing this issue.

Let's also take a look at the birth of modern-day referenda. Proposition 13 is the one that comes to mind in California, quite a while ago now. That was really the beginning of the idea of populist referenda around government decision-making taking over and replacing representational government. We know the disaster that's caused, quite frankly. I don't remember the exact wording, but it was a simplistic referendum that talked about slashing taxes and putting caps on how much increase there could be, with no consideration for the impact. One of the resulting impacts was that Orange county down there in California recently had to declare bankruptcy as a direct result of the kind of handcuffs that a simplistic one- or two-statement resolution can have if it's adopted and implemented in its very form.

I want to comment briefly on the comments of the member for Brampton South in the minute-plus I have left, because I found his remarks to be very thoughtful. I listened very carefully and I appreciated the type of debate you offered up. My only concern, I would suggest to you, is that again it's a standalone idea. Recognizing

that there are problems with the form of democracy we now have, given the amount of information that's out there, that changes the nature of decision-making.

My concern with embracing this particular mode as the be-all and end-all is that you're not taking into account what's going on in the States where they're having 10, 15, 20, 30 different resolutions on the ballot. People are now being handed practically a phone book when they walk in and vote in the United States. It lends itself, in my opinion, to those who have the money. Some of the best special interest groups in this country are the ones that have a lot of money. They can buy the advertising and convince people, with rather simplistic bumper-sticker slogans, that something's a good idea, and meanwhile behind it is something that's not necessarily good for the community.

I respond in a non-partisan way as you offer up your thoughts because I think they have merit in outlining the problem. We could also talk about the fact that the Internet provides a unique opportunity for democratic expression, but I have grave concerns about embracing this as the be-all and end-all. I hope we have something other than that down the road, but we do need some changes; I would agree with that.

1150

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** I have just a moment and I'll add my comments very quickly. When we began the debate I wondered who on earth would oppose this extension of power to the people. It is very clear now that members of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party are opposing this extension. I find it astonishing. Perhaps they find access to special interest groups and unions more appropriate than giving the people a chance to have initiatives on the ballot. I find that really strange and very curious. I suspect that will come back to haunt them in the next election.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for London South has two minutes.

**Mr Bob Wood:** I'd like to respond very briefly to some of the points that have been raised. The change proposed in this resolution is of course that there can be province-wide questions put on the ballot and they can be put on, not by the politicians, but by the people themselves.

To the members who have very rightly raised the question of what questions are going to go on the ballot, the answer is, what the people want is going to go on the ballot. The government is not going to define the question; the people are going to do that.

The cost is going to be minimal and it's going to be well worth it. Whether the province should pay for a province-wide vote is certainly open to discussion.

I've brought this forward as a resolution for the express purpose of giving guidance to the legislative committee which is now studying this and with the hope it will work out the details. I suggest, however, that this Legislature should give some guidance today to the committee. Either you believe in the people having a direct say or you don't. Today's the day when members can go on record whether or not they think that's the right way to do business in this province.



The question of how many signatures you need to get a question on the ballot is a very good one. The range tends to be from 3% to 10% of the people who voted in the last election. I personally would lean towards the higher number.

When we hear the concerns expressed, what they basically are is that the people would do stupid things, and I don't think they would. The history in other jurisdictions and in this jurisdiction is that the people are quite sensible when they vote on things on a ballot, and I think that's what we would get here.

As a government member, I have absolutely no fear of public scrutiny through direct voice of the people and I would urge all members to support that form of democratic initiative.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time provided for private ballot items has expired.

### HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSURANCE-SANTÉ

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** We will deal first with ballot item number 47, standing in the name of Mr Duncan. If any members are opposed to a vote on this ballot item, will they please rise.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

### MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** We'll now place the second question. We'll now deal with ballot item number 48, standing in the name of Mr Wood. If any members are opposed to a vote on this ballot item, will they please rise.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; there will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1154 to 1159.*

### HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSURANCE-SANTÉ

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Mr Duncan has moved second reading of Bill 87.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing.

#### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	O'Toole, John
Arnott, Ted	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Baird, John R.	Grandmaître, Bernard	Phillips, Gerry
Bartolucci, Rick	Gravelle, Michael	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David

Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Christopherson, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Shea, Derwyn
Colle, Mike	Martin, Tony	Wildman, Bud
Conway, Sean G.	McGuinty, Dalton	Wood, Len
Cooke, David S.	McLeod, Lyn	
Cordiano, Joseph	Murdoch, Bill	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will rise and remain standing.

#### Nays

Bassett, Isabel	Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia
Brown, Jim	Grimmett, Bill	Parker, John L.
Carroll, Jack	Guzzo, Garry J.	Pettit, Trevor
Chudleigh, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Preston, Peter
Clement, Tony	Hastings, John	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Danford, Harry	Hudak, Tim	Ross, Lillian
DeFaria, Carl	Johns, Helen	Sheehan, Frank
Doyle, Ed	Johnson, Bert	Smith, Bruce
Fisher, Barbara	Johnson, Ron	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Jordan, W. Leo	Vankoughnet, Bill
Ford, Douglas B.	Klees, Frank	Wood, Bob
Fox, Gary	Leadston, Gary L.	Young, Terence H.
Galt, Doug	Martiniuk, Gerry	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 34; the nays are 38.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

The doors will be open for 30 seconds.

### MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Mr Wood has moved private member's notice of motion number 31.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Flaherty, Jim	Murdoch, Bill
Baird, John R.	Ford, Douglas B.	O'Toole, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Fox, Gary	Parker, John L.
Bassett, Isabel	Galt, Doug	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Gilchrist, Steve	Pettit, Trevor
Brown, Jim	Grandmaître, Bernard	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Gravelle, Michael	Preston, Peter
Carroll, Jack	Grimmett, Bill	Ramsay, David
Chudleigh, Ted	Guzzo, Garry J.	Ross, Lillian
Clement, Tony	Hardeman, Ernie	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Hastings, John	Sergio, Mario
Conway, Sean G.	Hudak, Tim	Shea, Derwyn
Cooke, David S.	Johns, Helen	Sheehan, Frank
Cordiano, Joseph	Johnson, Ron	Smith, Bruce
Crozier, Bruce	Jordan, W. Leo	Turnbull, David
Danford, Harry	Klees, Frank	Vankoughnet, Bill
DeFaria, Carl	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Wood, Bob
Doyle, Ed	Leadston, Gary L.	Young, Terence H.
Duncan, Dwight	Martiniuk, Gerry	
Fisher, Barbara	Munro, Julia	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise and remain standing.



**Nays**

Agostino, Dominic	Kormos, Peter	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Christopherson, David	Marchese, Rosario	Wildman, Bud
Churley, Marilyn	Martin, Tony	Wood, Len
Johnson, Bert	Pupatello, Sandra	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 58; the nays are 11.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

All matters relating to private members' business having been completed, I will now leave the Chair and House will resume at 1:30.

*The House recessed from 1207 to 1332.*

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS****POLISH INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** For Canadians of Polish heritage, November 11 is Polish Independence Day. After the occupation forces were expelled from the Republic of Poland in 1918, a free and reunited, independent Poland was established on November 11.

For Polish Canadians, November 11 means freedom: the freedom to continue Poland's own destiny. Today we are reminded by the anniversary of Polish Independence Day that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance, in that true peace must be built on the principles of freedom, liberty and democracy for all.

Today we take pride in the accomplishments of Polish Canadians and we wish them Godspeed as they celebrate Polish Independence Day.

I would like to recognize the presence of Mrs Hanna Sokolski, the president of the Polish Canadian Congress, Toronto branch, who is in the gallery. She's inviting all members of this Legislature to Polonia's celebrations on the weekend. Please contact the Canadian Polish Congress for details of the weekend.

*Remarks in Polish.*

**ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION**

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I want to be the first today to recognize the presence in the gallery of the Canadian Legion, and to thank them, particularly the branch in Sault Ste Marie, for the fine work they continue to do on behalf of veterans in our province and in so many other ways in our community.

**CHILD CARE**

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I also want to bring to the attention of the House a concern that's been raised in my community by those people who are charged with looking after young children under the guise of child care.

I met last week with a very dedicated, hardworking and sincere group of child care providers at the Prince Township Parent Child Resource Centre, and they spoke to me of their very real concern about and interest in the paper that was presented to this House by the Minister of Community and Social Services, Mrs Ecker. They are

worried, to say the least. Mind you, they're being very fair, I believe, and reasonable in raising their concerns.

They know that change needs to happen. They know the child care situation in the province is not the best and can always be improved, and they meet regularly to talk about that. But in this instance, they wanted to share with me their concern that the standards that have been built up and arrived at by them and governments over the last few years not be diminished in any way.

They're concerned about the safety of children. They're concerned that there be universal access by all families across the province to first-class day care and that it be available in all communities across the province.

I raise that today, bring it to your attention, and hopefully Mrs Ecker will be listening.

**FIRE SAFETY AWARDS**

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** It's a great honour for me, on behalf of the government of Ontario, to congratulate this year's winners of the fire marshal's Public Fire Safety Council's fire safety awards.

Today the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services presented awards to 15 groups and individuals in recognition of their outstanding contributions to fire safety and fire safety education. These award recipients included Ontario residents of all ages from many communities, including five children who received a Fire Safety Action Award because their response to fire emergencies reduced injuries and in some cases even saved lives.

To highlight just one award winner, eight-year-old Katie McCann of Brampton alerted her mother and father when she awoke to the smell of smoke and led her little sister and brother to safety, then ran next door to dial 911.

Other winners, some of whom are in the gallery today, include nine-year-old Robert Blenkarn and eight-year-old Jackie Blenkarn of Mallorytown; nine-year-old David D'Silva of Kitchener; eight-year-old Holly Guppy of Temagami; Dennis Chippa of North Bay; John Sinkowski and Tom Myerscough of Nanticoke; the Windsor Professional Fire Fighters Association; Loeb Princess Street and GTO 960 Radio, both of Kingston; the Orleans Lions Club; the Oshawa Motor City Kinsmen; Abbotsford Moving and Storage of Kanata; and the Original Bay News of Pickering.

I ask all members of the House to join me in showing their appreciation for the leadership shown by all these award winners.

**STUDENT PROGRAM  
STAGE POUR ÉTUDIANTS**

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell):** This week I am introducing a new educational program for grade 8 students of my riding. Students will have the opportunity to come and spend three days here in Toronto with me and my staff to learn more about the Legislative Assembly and Ontario politics.

Because my riding is more than 500 kilometres northeast of Toronto, this is the first visit to Toronto for



many students. Therefore we incorporated a leisure component for after work hours, and the students will get an opportunity to visit some of the main tourist attractions here in Toronto.

J'ai donc le plaisir de présenter aux membres de l'Assemblée législative les deux premiers élèves à prendre part à ce stage de formation. Ils sont présents dans le galerie des membres. Il s'agit de Geneviève Duval et de Joël Charlebois de l'école Curé-Labrosse de St-Eugène, du Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française de Prescott et Russell. Bienvenue, welcome, Geneviève et Joël.

### GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Yesterday the Premier suggested that women should be at home in the kitchen. His comments are typical of a government that has undertaken a systematic attack on Ontario women. The latest front is agencies, boards and commissions. Let's look at the facts.

Last year the Ontario Municipal Board was chaired by Ms Helen Cooper. Now it's chaired by Mr Doug Colbourne. Last year the Ontario Human Rights Commission was chaired by Ms Rosemary Brown. Today it's chaired by Mr Keith Norton. It's the same at the Ontario Criminal Code Review Board, the Commercial Registration Appeal Tribunal, the Ontario Labour Relations Board and the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario. Capable women are being shoved aside to make room for Mike Harris's patronage appointments.

In the last year there has been a turnover of about 11 positions in the Circle of Chairs, a group of about 50 board chairs who meet monthly. In 1995 those 11 positions were held by three men and eight women. Now, in 1996, these positions are held by nine men and two women.

This is just a snapshot. This is just the tip of the iceberg. It's being played out under our noses. Welcome to the Mike Harris boys' club.

### ELAINE POMAJBA

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** I would like to ask all members to join with me today in paying tribute to a young woman from my riding of Chatham-Kent.

In early February, Elaine Pomajba of Chatham was diagnosed as having Wilson disease, a rare genetic disorder that causes the body to produce an overabundance of copper, which then attacks the liver. Days later she received her transplant. Now a student at the University of Guelph, Elaine attended the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair's steer auction and offered her steer for sale, notifying the bidders that she intended to donate the proceeds to the University Hospital in London. She had named her steer Wilson, after her disease, but he's better known as Wide Willy due to his immense girth.

Thanks to the generosity of the bidders who kept buying and returning Wide Willy for further auction, Elaine was able to raise \$14,000 for the transplant service. This 21-year-old, in gratitude for what she had received, found a novel way to give something back to

those who helped save her life. She has earned our applause for her wonderful gesture.

1340

### ASSISTANCE TO NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I want to direct my statement today to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, who, as the alleged voice for the north in the Harris government, must publicly tell those of us who live in the north where he stands on an extremely important issue.

Minister, we know that you participated in the cabinet retreat last week where the Minister of Finance announced he'd make another \$3 billion in cuts to be delivered in his forthcoming economic statement. An area of funding that I fear may be on the chopping block as a part of these cuts is the northern support payment that is a crucial need for all our northern municipalities.

Mr Speaker, as you know, these payments are not a handout or a subsidy. They are equalization payments that recognize that a large proportion of the revenues gathered in the north in mining, forestry and other related businesses go directly into the provincial treasury without being subjected to municipal taxation. The location of these activities in unorganized areas — a phenomenon, I may say, that's not seen in all of southern Ontario — requires that these funds must be returned to the north in order for our communities to maintain the level of services we require.

Minister, as the official northern voice in cabinet, I trust you fought to maintain the northern support payments and that you in fact will announce to the mayors and reeves gathering in Thunder Bay tomorrow that in the face of potentially huge transfer cuts our northern support payments will remain. Our municipalities cannot withstand the threatened 40% cut in transfer payments from the province, certainly not without this support. Minister, you're either with us or you're against us. Which is it?

### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Last Monday evening I had the privilege of attending the founding meeting of SOS, Securing Ongoing Support, which was held in Sudbury. The event was organized by a group of very courageous women who are concerned about the large numbers of families experiencing financial hardship as a direct result of the cuts to the family support plan.

In mid-August, this government laid off 290 staff and closed the regional offices. Women and children who used to receive regular support payments are now not. Payors who are making regular payments are discovering their money has not reached their families. They're having more money deducted from their paycheques to cover alleged arrears, even though the necessary payments have been remitted by employers to the family support plan.

About 50 people attended this meeting. The overwhelming majority of them were women who are experiencing tremendous difficulties in obtaining support payments. Again and again, I heard how these families



have been receiving money regularly and then began to have problems after the cuts. Women are unable to pay their rent, their heat, their hydro bills, buy clothes for their children or put food on the table. These women can't come to Queen's Park and tell Charles Harnick directly about the impact of cuts on their lives, but they did agree to relate their stories on video and I want to give that tape to the Attorney General today.

These are moving and powerful accounts of what is really happening to women and children right now in Ontario. No one in viewing it could possibly deny that this Conservative government is responsible for creating the misery felt by these people. It's unacceptable that the government is financing the tax cut on the backs of these women and children.

*An alarm clock was heard to ring.*

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I do want to give —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Beaches-Woodbine, I would prefer just to finish the last member's statement and I'll come back to your point of privilege.

#### TVONTARIO

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** It is my great pleasure to announce to the House today that this Saturday, November 9, the Alliance for Children's Television will be honouring TVOntario's English-language network, TVO, with a special achievement award for its contribution to children's programming. Each year through their awards of excellence the alliance recognizes those who have made a special contribution to children's programming. This year marks the first time they will honour an organization rather than an individual with a special achievement award.

During its 26-year history, TVO has produced such critically acclaimed series as Bookmice, Join In!, Math Patrol, Readalong and Polka Dot Door. More recently, the network has produced and broadcast the hit shows TVOKids, Off the Hook —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Members, this is a member's statement. Let's allow the member to finish it, please.

**Mr Clement:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. They have produced and broadcast the hit shows TVOKids, Off the Hook, Kratt's Creatures, and of course Polka Dot Shorts.

A lot has changed since TVO was first created 26 years ago. The broadcast industry has grown, matured and become more diversified, yet Ontarians should be pleased to note that as TVO changes in response to the evolution of the broadcast environment, it can compete and succeed. Let us celebrate TVO's successes, recognizing that continued success can only be achieved by adapting to Ontario's ever-changing broadcasting and educational environment.

I would like to invite all of my colleagues in this House to join me in congratulating TVO for earning this special achievement award. I would direct your attention to the visitors' gallery in offering a warm round of

applause for our special guests Patty and Jo from TVO-Kids, and everyone's dear friend Polkaroo.

**The Speaker:** As you know, the member for Brampton South, it's out of order to actually introduce people through members' statements, but considering the eventful notice of the day, welcome to Polkaroo.

To the member for Beaches-Woodbine, before your point of privilege, the clock is a prop. It must go before I can hear your point of privilege. That's fine, thank you. If you could give it to the Sergeant at Arms. Now, member for Beaches-Woodbine, point of privilege?

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Mr Speaker, I actually want to offer my apologies to you and to the chamber. My clock was supposed to go off at 5 o'clock this morning so I had time to get up and cook a hot breakfast. I don't know why it didn't go off at the right time, but my apologies.

**Mr Bernard Grandmaitre (Ottawa East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As whip for my party on the standing committee on general government this morning, I tried to get the Chair and also the members of all three parties to permit the presentation of MPPs who would like to address Bill 81, the redistribution legislation, and I was turned down. I find this horrible on the part of the government, to deny not only voters but MPPs —

**The Speaker:** Order. I trust that you took your point of order up with the Chair of the committee and I can only assume that the Chair ruled on your point of order. Having assumed that, making that assumption — if I'm wrong, you may correct me — that is a ruling made by a Chair of a committee and it's not appealable in the chamber.

I have a point of privilege, I think, from the leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** Mr Speaker, I scanned the government's list of ministerial statements. Is someone for the government going to apologize on behalf of the Premier for the insulting comments he made yesterday to working women?

**The Speaker:** Point of order, the member for Parkdale.

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** Mr Speaker, I have a question for you, actually, because I understand that from today on, you apparently said it's quite permissible to have clocks ticking, animals in the Legislature. What kind of place has this become? I'm asking you, Mr Speaker, is this now permitted, that we can have signs, demonstrations and applause?

**The Speaker:** That was a really interesting point of order, but there's nothing I can say. I ruled the clock out of order, signs are out of order, and that wasn't a real animal, to the member for Parkdale.

1350

#### REMEMBRANCE DAY

#### JOUR DU SOUVENIR

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, on a more serious note, I think we would all in this House agree and I believe we have unanimous consent to have one speaker from each party caucus stand and pay tribute for Remembrance Day.



**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Do we have unanimous consent to pay tribute for Remembrance Day? Agreed.

**Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East):** It is indeed a great privilege for me to rise before this House today and help pay tribute to those who so valiantly fought for our country. I see many of them up in the galleries and I would like them here today.

I would like to pay tribute to those Canadians who lost their lives, to those who lost a part of themselves. We honour their spirit and their sacrifice on this upcoming Remembrance Day.

On Monday, November 11, everyone in this chamber will be at a cenotaph, school or park remembering the more than 100,000 Canadians who lost their lives in battle for the freedom of our country and in fighting for other countries as well. We also honour those who escaped death and survived. Many of them unfortunately suffered in that process.

Many here today, I suspect, were probably either too young to remember or were not yet born when the Great War happened and when Korea came and went. However, there are a few who remember what it was like. The memories are still vivid for those people and for the people in the galleries today, I'm sure.

However, as time has passed, too many in our society have become disconnected from the events that took place. They are images depicted in movies and books, isolated events and, to some, almost fiction. The knowledge that our children and grandchildren have comes from what they read in their history books or what they see on television.

Like everyone here, I pray that they will never know what it is like to experience the horrors of war, but they must understand that history is not merely a story. It is a series of emotions and events experienced, individual by individual, that could never be captured or accurately portrayed. They must also understand that war is never glamorous nor romantic. Friends indeed were lost and families were disconnected.

On Remembrance Day we gather to try to remember, to learn and to listen, and I mean listen, to those individual stories. It is only by doing this that we will understand the importance of not repeating history's mistakes.

**Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East):** I'm honoured to have this opportunity to say a few words as we mark this day as Remembrance Day in the Legislature.

C'est un honneur pour moi, an nom de mon caucus, d'adresser la parole à tous mes collègues à l'occasion du jour du Souvenir.

Most of us only know about war from books and movies, and that's something to be thankful for. But to understand the real experience of war, we should listen to the voices of those who were there. We can learn so much from them about the meaning of honour, comradeship, sacrifice and the waste and devastation of war.

Charles Cromwell Martin is one of those voices. As company sergeant-major of Company A of the Queen's Own Rifles, Charlie was one of the first men on the beach at Normandy on D-Day. In his book, *Battle Diary*, Charlie remembers:

"There was just us and an awful lot of ocean.... All that remained within sight was our own fleet of ten assault craft, moving abreast in the early-morning silence in a gradually extending line facing the shore.... We had never felt so alone in our lives."

As Charlie said at our interview: "The boats don't reach shore all at once, only about two at a time. So this major invasion force really looks like just a few flies scattered around. The next boat over is maybe 750 yards away and may touch shore a few minutes later.

"Once you hit the beach, you don't stop for anything. Those who do pay a terrible price. You must keep moving, because if the enemy knows where you are, they bring artillery and mortar fire down and you suffer heavy casualties.

"Some of the fellows didn't want to go. But as long as you were going, they would go too. If you, as the first man, go down, then so does everyone else. Of course, then you have to get up again. That's the trick. But it's like slow motion. You don't see the enemy, or any big shells going over, not one battleship, although there were hundreds of them out in the Channel. Unlike in the movies, there was only one plane offering us air support."

Facing death creates an incredible bond between those who go through the experience together. As Charlie says, "Soldiers in combat are even closer than brothers, living and training together every day for four years, added to the knowledge that you must depend absolutely on each other."

As Charlie explains, "Men go into battle with the attitude, 'If you can do it, I can do it, and I'm not going to let you down.' That's why I say there is no purer love than among comrades in battle."

Charlie continues: "The hardest thing to take during the war is that in every battle someone you know very well is always killed. At Boulogne, we had a very tough objective: capturing the church of St Martin's on the Hill. I was in the action with Jimmy and Steve, whom I had known at Camp Borden in 1940. Jimmy Young came from Toronto and Steve de Blois from Cochrane, Ontario. They were as different as chalk and cheese. Jimmy was a really smooth soldier, tall and good-looking, and he could handle his weapons well. Steve was a farmer and somewhat out of his element. But Jimmy was always there to help him. They were always together. Steve was killed on the road just at the top of the hill and Jimmy five feet away from him. It was so hard not to give in to despair, to move forward, to take up the banner and to get the job done."

In the years since the end of the war, Charlie has supported his family and has been an active member of his community. But he also spends a lot of his time in safeguarding the memory of his old friends. His memory is a treasure house for those families who have lost a father or husband or had a grandfather they never knew. Their gratitude for his stories is boundless. Because of him, the legacy of these men, gone too soon, will not be lost.

During the 50th anniversary celebrations of the end of the war, Charlie met many young people who were attending the ceremonies. He was struck by how much they reminded him of his comrades. He sees it in young



people's eyes today, their desire to serve a common cause in battles that really matter in arenas where they can make a difference. Although we hope that the drive for war has receded into history, that spirit prevails and gives us cause to be proud to be Canadians.

Every morning on my way to Queen's Park I pass the soldiers' tower on the University of Toronto campus. Under the archway are inscribed the names of the students who died in the First and Second World Wars and one who died in the Korean conflict. I see their names and wonder what their stories are. These young men rose above their individual frailties to make the ultimate sacrifice, something most of us will never understand. Through our pride in them we can be proud of ourselves as Canadians and of our dreams for Canada and its place in the free world.

This year, as we give honour to those who served our country in the interest of peace, we might remember that today's soldiers carry the ideal in their own service. As time passes and fewer veterans are alive to give testament to the horror and waste of war, it is even more important that we absorb their stories into our collective consciousness. Their accounts all give us this caution: that misplaced pride and honour must never again override our reason to lead us to the brink of destruction. Our weapons are too powerful and our legacy of loss too real to allow us to march down that path again.

1400

Finally, for those who have died and to those who came home, we express our appreciation and respect and a promise to bide by the lessons you learned, at so great a cost.

I'm very pleased that Charlie Martin is here with us today, and his war bride, Vi, who herself served four and a half years in the British Royal Artillery. Thank you so much for your service.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** It's an honour and a privilege for me, on behalf of my caucus, to join with my friends the members for Wentworth East and Carleton East in paying tribute to those who gave the supreme sacrifice for our country in conflicts gone by, the Great War, the Second World War, the Korean conflict and all those who have served in peacekeeping activities since the 1950s in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Remembrance Day is always a day for looking back, reminiscing, thinking of friends who did not return, thinking of brothers and sisters, sons and daughters who went to Europe, went to the Pacific or served in other parts of the world and did not return home.

Some might say, what has a person like me, who was born after the Second World War, got to say on Remembrance Day, even though members of my family served in both the Great War and in the Second World War. I think all of us owe a great debt of gratitude to the people who gave the supreme sacrifice, but I think also of those who returned home who had seen things they would not wish to have ever witnessed, who had been wounded either physically or psychologically by what they experienced.

I also think of the parents and grandparents of people who did not return. A very wise person once said to me that when your grandparents or your parents die, you lose

a piece of your past, but when a son or a daughter dies, you lose your future. It's a tremendous loss, and all of those people who are remembering this weekend children who did not return are experiencing once again an enormous feeling of loss, but I'm sure they're also feeling an enormous feeling of pride in what their children were able to do for all of us.

It's not just a time for looking back, though. I think if that sacrifice is to be worth anything, it's important for us to be looking forward and to be recognizing that the freedoms we have enjoyed and take for granted many times in this country are now just being striven for by many, many peoples around the world. We have young Canadians serving in peacekeeping roles today many, many miles from our shores, who are under enormous pressure.

A young person once said to me: "More people have died since 1945 than died during the two wars, in conflicts around the globe. Doesn't that mean that those sacrifices were in vain?" In my view, they were only in vain if we do not continue to strive to bring an end to war, to bring about peace, to do all we can as a wealthy, industrialized, modern society to help to rectify wrongs, to help to end injustice and inequality, to help to bring prosperity and democracy to all the peoples of the world. If we don't continue to strive for that goal, then perhaps the sacrifice was for naught.

But to all of those men and women who served Canada and who are here with us today and will be at cenotaphs across Ontario and Canada on Monday, I know deep down in their hearts they are as proud of those young women and men who are serving in peacekeeping roles in the Canadian Forces around the world to bring about that goal as we are of them and the people they left behind in Europe and in Asia.

**The Speaker:** Will the members please rise for a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### TRUCKING SAFETY

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I rise today to introduce legislation that will help us get unsafe trucks and operators off our roads.

About a year ago we introduced an action plan for road safety that has become the blueprint for making our highways safer. We are building on that plan. Last spring, we brought in legislation that dealt with higher fines for truck drivers and the administrative driver's licence suspension program. Just last week we took another step in our plan by introducing a new education session for drivers 80 years and older which will replace the mandatory road test.

The legislation I'm introducing today is also part of the action plan for road safety, targeted at those who put others at risk. We are responding to some disturbing statistics that can't be ignored. Convictions for commercial vehicle safety offences have increased by 241% from



1992 to 1995. Convictions for brake-related offences increased by 48% over the same period of time. We are also responding to recommendations from several coroners' inquests that call for tougher measures against unsafe carriers.

It is for these reasons that this bill focuses on better and more efficient monitoring, earlier interventions, increased deterrents and incentives. This bill calls for the introduction of a rating system that would provide an accurate picture of a carrier's safety record. The rating will come from a company's commercial vehicle operating registration, which is a listing of convictions, accidents and on-road safety defects, and an audit at the carrier's place of business. The audit itself will include a physical inspection of the vehicles. Since these ratings will be available to the public, this information will be particularly useful to shippers and others who want to do business with a safe carrier.

1410

The legislation gives the registrar of motor vehicles more authority. We want to take quicker action against bad operators before an accident happens. We will require that fleet sizes and distances travelled be reported so that we can step in sooner if a company starts getting a disproportionate number of violations.

We believe that better, not more, regulation is essential to road safety, and this bill gives us more flexibility in streamlining our own systems: by allowing one or two members of the Licence Suspension Appeal Board to hear uncomplicated appeals; by adding fax transmissions and courier delivery to sending out sanction notices; and by setting a court appearance for an unsafe operator at a location where a truck has travelled, not necessarily where a charge was laid.

We have talked to our partners in the trucking industry and with our stakeholders. They support our plans with one condition, and that condition is that the system be fair and applied equally to all.

This bill also includes some legislative amendments, some minor word changes to various sections of the Highway Traffic Act and other statutes.

This legislation takes us another step closer to safer roads by cracking down on those who put others at risk.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I rise to advise the Legislature of a potentially serious incident at the Downsview family responsibility office that was brought to the attention of the Ministry of the Attorney General this morning. The ministry has been advised that there may have been unauthorized access to files held by the family responsibility office. The ministry has been advised of the following:

(1) That a security guard heard noises at approximately 6:15 in the morning. A subsequent security check disclosed the presence of three individuals on the premises. I understand that the member for Welland-Thorold and the member for Sudbury East have identified themselves as two of the individuals involved.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** This is unbelievable, Charles. This is absolutely unbelievable.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Why didn't you have some security on the door? Why didn't you make the files secure?

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Surely you're not serious.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Completely serious.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** When people discover what you are up to, call the police and intimidate them, eh, Charles?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The third party, I'm asking you to come to order. The minister's making a statement. You'll have your chance to respond.

**Mr Wildman:** It's a shameful statement.

**The Speaker:** Member for Algoma.

**Mr Hampton:** It's a shameful statement — absolutely shameful.

**The Speaker:** Leader of the third party, you'll have your chance to respond. I ask you to let him continue.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Downsview is a secured-access facility. The ministry takes the confidentiality of the family responsibility office very seriously. For this reason, we have taken the following steps: The Metropolitan Toronto Police have been contacted and are conducting a criminal investigation into these allegations; in addition, the freedom of information office has been contacted to determine whether privacy rights have been violated. We've taken the appropriate steps to prevent any further unauthorized access at the office.

**Mr Speaker,** a point of privilege.

**The Speaker:** I would ask that the point of privilege be taken up after members' statements.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I think it is more appropriate that I do it at this point.

**The Speaker:** I say to the Attorney General, we are in the middle of members' statements at this time. It would be better for me if we continued and completed members' statements, and if you have a point of privilege at that point, I would take it up.

Ministry statements? Seeing none, responses.

#### TRUCKING SAFETY

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** I'd like to respond to the Minister of Transportation. As you know, for the last year and a half, the minister has promised to crack down on unsafe trucks. Up until now, all we've had is promises.

The proof is in what's happening on our highways. Our highways are a war zone because of the unsafe trucks. A day doesn't go by when you don't see a truck that's tipped over, a tanker trailer, a transport trailer that's holding up traffic for six to eight hours, endangering motorists, endangering people's lives. Every day it's happening across this province, despite your promised crackdown.

These are more empty promises, because, Mr Minister, you still will not do what the OPP has told you to do. Officer Cam Woolley from the Truck Troopers has told you that your fines are a joke; they're still the cost of doing business. It's much easier to pay a \$300 or \$400 fine than to fix a truck's brakes or change its wheels.



Your fines should be \$2,000, maybe \$10,000 or \$20,000, because they're a joke. You are giving them a licence to drive our highways with unsafe vehicles. You are giving them carte blanche because you refuse to take serious action.

We've told you before there should be automatic roadside suspensions for unsafe trucks. They shouldn't be allowed to go on with a small ticket and to continue to operate for months and years to come because they can go on appealing and appealing and appealing. In fact, there's that one company that ran into a woman's home while she was doing the laundry this summer. That company is still operating and all its subsidiaries are still operating and we haven't heard anything about that tragic accident. Why does it take three to four months to find out why a truck ran into someone's home? Where are the answers?

The next thing you should do, Mr Minister, and you refuse to do it, is if a trucking company has had a record of unsafe trucks that go to 500 or 600 violations, they shouldn't be allowed to operate while they're under appeal, and that's what they're doing. These companies have records that go back four or five years; they're still operating. In fact, these companies still get government contracts. Why should a company with an unsafe driving record still get contracts with your ministry, with other ministries? Their contracts should be immediately torn up if they operate unsafely on our highways. This is condoning the unsafe operators by given them government contracts.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Charlie, who do you get advice from? You need some new staff.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** Desperate tactics when you get discovered.

**Mr Colle:** Mr Minister, it's very plain. The people of Ontario have no faith in you providing safety on our highways because these trucks are basically risking —

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Ask Kormos what he did with the security guard.

**Mr Colle:** — the lives of people on a daily basis. The OPP is telling you this. The citizens of Ontario are telling you this. Every night on television there is a tragic accident because of these trucks that you are condoning.

There has to be something done. This has become an epidemic on our highways. I implore the minister to listen to the OPP, to take these bad operators out of business, because what these bad operators are doing is in order to —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Oakwood, sit down. Stop the clock, please.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** You called the cops on a publicity stunt.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** — break into offices.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I think the Attorney General just accused two members in this House on the record of breaking into an office. Could he withdraw that? Or is he as Attorney General not only launching investigations of members today —

**The Speaker:** Order. With the greatest respect to the member for Windsor-Riverside, I did not hear the Attorney General accuse —

**Mr Cooke:** Ask him.

**The Speaker:** I will do so. If the Attorney General accused two members of breaking and entering, if he would like to withdraw, I give him the opportunity.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** If that is what I was interpreted to have said, I withdraw it.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** On a point of privilege.

**The Speaker:** I have a point of privilege coming up at the end of these statements. I'll be happy to entertain your point of privilege then. It will only be six minutes from now. If you bear with me, I will get the statements out of the way. And lastly, if you could take your seat please, member for Welland-Thorold.

I understand, the third party, you have some concerns and you have them addressed, but right now the official opposition is responding to ministers' statements and it's very difficult to hear.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** We were provoked.

**The Speaker:** With all due respect, I think there was provocation on both sides. If we can just maintain order for six minutes, we'll deal with the points of privilege.

**Mr Colle:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

There are over 100 bad operators on Ontario highways that have records as long as your arm in terms of safety violations. These companies are operating without any kind of sanctions because they play the appeal game through the courts, through their fancy lawyers, and they put motorists at risk, citizens at risk. In fact, they force truck drivers to take unsafe trucks on our roads because they tell the truck drivers, "You either take the truck or leave the job." That's what they're doing, because these bad operators are basically more interested in making money than in making trucks safe.

That's what the minister should be doing. He should immediately take action to suspend the licences right on the spot of these 100 companies, and he knows who they are. They should be published in the newspaper. List the 500 violations of some of these companies. There are over, as I say, 100 who are routinely risking lives in Ontario.

1420

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** In the absence of my colleague from Nipigon, who is our critic on transportation, I'm pleased to have an opportunity to respond to the Minister of Transportation today. We are certainly very supportive of some of the actions that are being taken in terms of road safety by this government and want the minister to know that it is really important for the ministry to be responding very promptly and vigorously to the kinds of problems we all have seen from unsafe trucks.

My colleague from Oakwood went through a lot of the history of these problems over the last few months and I'm not going to repeat that, but it is very, very important for all of us to recognize that these actions have to be backed up and done very vigorously. When even the Truck Troopers, the elite squad which is supposed to be



investigating commercial vehicles on Toronto highways for the OPP, calls the level of fines a joke even after the increase that's been allowed, the maximums that have been allowed, it really is important for us to look at what's happening. We have a lot of people deeply concerned. We've had injuries and deaths that have been caused as a result of this problem. So it's important that the minister understand that we will be looking to him for much more vigorous action even than has been taken.

In response to the concerns around the appeal process, yes, we know that it's important for any kind of punishment to have some form of appeal, but it is also possible for people to be suspended during the period of the appeal, and we would urge the minister to respond to the repeated calls from law enforcement officers from the concerned communities that these trucks not be allowed on the road during an appeal process, particularly with the kinds of records that we see with 450 to 500 different violations.

The last issue would be that it is not appropriate for the government to be doing business with trucking firms that have repeat convictions of the kind we have seen, and I would urge the minister to urge on his colleagues a clause in any kind of tendering process that would allow the government to exact a different kind of financial penalty.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I rise to respond to the statement from the Attorney General. What an outrageous statement. Let me give you the statement that the Attorney General should have given. He should have come in here today and he should have said: "I have been discovered. All the stories I've been telling women and children about computer glitches delaying their family support cheques, all the stories I've been telling about, 'The thing is fixed,' are wrong." He should have come in here today and he should have said: "What's going on up in Downsview has been discovered. It's been discovered that there's no one working there; it's been discovered that literally thousands of files are lying around with no one to look after them. It's been discovered that there's inadequate security there. It's been discovered that there's no one at that office looking after women and children's files, looking after the delivery of family support cheques." That's what the Attorney General should have come in here and said today.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Government members, please, the member has the floor. I would ask you for —

**Mr Hampton:** Instead of coming in here and coming clean, instead of coming in here and saying that the family support plan offices have been shut down and this office in Downsview that the Attorney General talks about all the time isn't even operating, is nowhere near operating, won't be operating for a couple of months — instead of coming clean and telling people what the facts are, the Attorney General walks in here and threatens two members of the Legislature with a criminal investigation.

Why, Speaker? Because they dared to hold him accountable. They dared to hold him accountable.

And then, what does he say in this House, the person who is supposed to administer justice in this province? He says these members are guilty of break-and-enter. He didn't say "alleged." He didn't say "might entertain." He's setting himself up as judge and jury. The minister who is supposed to administer justice in the province said these members are guilty of break-and-enter.

Speaker, the only person who is guilty here is an Attorney General who, when he is found out, when he is discovered, tries to intimidate people.

#### ATTORNEY GENERAL'S COMMENTS

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Our caucus received a copy of the Attorney General's statement to the House today some moments before the House resumed or began this afternoon, and the Attorney General, of course, read that statement in under the guise of a minister's statement.

I understand that the Attorney General has called the police. I understand from his statement that Ms Martel and I are the subjects of this criminal investigation. I understand that. I welcome a criminal investigation because, yes, I'm confident crimes have been committed.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Welland-Thorold, you must get to your point of privilege. This isn't statements or speeches.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you. But then, within moments of announcing that, the Attorney General of this province announces in this House, heard by many, that they are guilty of break-and-enter into an office —

**The Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, that was withdrawn.

**Mr Kormos:** No, no. That does not put Ms Martel and I in any different position —

**The Speaker:** No. I have great appreciation for that. The member —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, I'm not suggesting that anything that has taken place today is not serious. I agree, but the fact remains that in this chamber you can stand and ask for a member to withdraw the comment. The Attorney General withdrew the comment. I don't know where the privilege begins and ends now. If you could get to it, I'd appreciate it. If you could get to the privilege —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre — I appreciate the points that you're trying to make. If you could get to the privilege, I'd be very much appreciative.

**Mr Kormos:** If I may, my privilege was breached the minute the Attorney General uttered the words that he did to the effect that "they" — clearly meaning Ms Martel and I — were guilty of a criminal offence. That he can subsequently withdraw it does not sanitize it, doesn't erase it or eradicate it, doesn't change the reality of it. The Attorney General of this province has declared publicly that I'm under investigation and now that I'm guilty. It's a total violation of my rights —



**The Speaker:** — as a member. I understand. That's why I stood. I directed it to the Attorney General. I asked him, if he made those comments, to withdraw.

Beyond that, I say to the member for Welland-Thorold, there's little, if anything, as Speaker, that I am allowed to do or liable to do. I obviously have a crew of points of order, I assume.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Point of privilege, Mr Speaker: This is a very, very serious matter. I draw your attention to Erskine May, the 21st edition, Parliamentary Practice, page 74, "Freedom from arrest." One of the most important privileges of a member of Parliament when carrying on his or her duties is the freedom from arrest.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wildman:** Mr Speaker, I do not rise on a frivolous matter. I raise this very, very seriously.

What we have is two members of this Legislative Assembly carrying out their duties as members of the Legislative Assembly who have received a large number of calls from constituents over difficulties in dealing with a government office. They choose then to visit the government office with a security guard. They meet the security guard outside of the office, the door is wide open, the security guard accompanies them in, there's a videotape of the whole thing, and then the Attorney General —

1430

**The Speaker:** There's no privilege. It's if it's in the precinct.

I would caution the member for Algoma only on one point. The point is that I, as Speaker, have the obligation and right and am duty-bound to protect the precinct and those areas that are designated as the precinct for members of the Legislature. This, as I understand, happened in a ministry office off the precinct and off the grounds over which I have any jurisdiction.

Now, I know the member for Algoma is very serious and you're very concerned, and I appreciate the point of privilege that you've made. But you must understand that, as Speaker, I have jurisdiction over the precinct, the precinct being this building and three floors of the Whitney Block. If actions take place outside of this precinct, those are actions that are up to courts, police beyond these corridors. I would appreciate it if you would understand the point we already made.

**Mr Wildman:** If I could, Mr Speaker, I just would draw your attention to one thing and then I'll move on.

**The Speaker:** Okay. One thing and then we'll move on.

**Mr Wildman:** I would ask that you refer to the principle that the King's servants doing their duty should not be impeded by litigation.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate that. I understand there are many points of privilege on this. I would ask that you be direct and very much to the point.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, because I think we need your help on this: The Attorney General indicated that it was the government's intention to lay charges. We understand that that's his right. But during the debate he said that the members did break and enter.

I realize that you required him to withdraw that comment. My question, though, is this: Is it your opinion that his withdrawing of that comment — he is the Chief Justice in the province — is that sufficient in a court that the members have not in fact been judged today to have been guilty of break and enter? And I would ask you to perhaps not rule quickly on it, Mr Speaker, because it's important to all of us. I can understand the charge against the members, but for the Attorney General to say that he's reached a conclusion on it, I'm not sure that simply withdrawing the comment is sufficient.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the point of order that you've made and I understand the concern and issue on the opposition benches, as well as the concern and issue on the government side. I think obviously there's clearly a difference of opinion, a very severe difference of opinion that's very important to settle.

I am prepared to reserve. I am prepared to take this back and report back to the Legislature a week Monday when the place reconvenes.

I understand the points of order you've made. You understand what I've said today. I am somewhat predisposed to the position with respect to the precinct. I appreciate what you brought forward. I give you an undertaking to review that and report back to this Legislature at the earliest time.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** Mr Speaker, I don't think there's ever been such a — and I'm a little concerned, if I might, with all due respect to your 80% ruling on what I think is an incredible situation that we have seen here this afternoon. I don't believe in the 19 1/2 years that I've been here that I've ever seen the AG come into the House and announce a criminal investigation into the actions of two MPPs and then condemn them a few minutes later on interjection. I would ask you to just sit back and to listen to this one in its entirety and to think about this, because this is an incredibly serious situation that has happened here in the House.

I do have a reference in Beauchesne that I think makes it very clear that it's not just a matter of what happens in the precinct. On page 24 of Beauchesne, section 85, "Beyond the few exceptions made, a member is fully responsible in the ordinary courts for any offence not 'within the scope of his duties in the course of parliamentary business.'"

I think that makes it very clear, and you know as well as I do that there has been debate in this place and there has been discussion now for several weeks about what has been happening with the family support plan. All of us, as MPPs, have had incredible numbers of inquiries. The members became aware of a particular instance where there were records that were not secured. It is their responsibility to investigate that and bring that information back to the Legislature. That's exactly what they have done. Now the result is that the chief law officer, who also happens to be our colleague in this place and a member of the majority, responds by saying, "I'm going to investigate you, put all the police on you and do a criminal investigation."

Mr Speaker, that is not something — just relax for a couple of minutes. Mr Speaker, that is not something —



**The Speaker:** The member for Windsor-Riverside, why don't you relax for a couple of minutes. The member for Windsor-Riverside, firstly, I am taking this very seriously and you don't have to give me an argument about being fair and practical in reviewing. I am.

Secondly, I am relaxed, as relaxed as I plan to be. I would ask the member for Windsor-Riverside to summarize and then you can relax as well.

**Mr Cooke:** I've been very brief and it's a little difficult when the Speaker is sitting in his —

**The Speaker:** Do you want to debate with me, or do you want to —

**Mr Cooke:** No, Mr Speaker, would you let me finish?

**The Speaker:** The member for Windsor-Riverside, I will allow you to finish. I'm asking you to summarize. All the points you've made, I understand very clearly. I've heard them a couple of times. I'm asking you to summarize, please.

**Mr Cooke:** I would have been finished already if you hadn't interrupted in the last two minutes.

**The Speaker:** The member for Windsor-Riverside, take your seat, please. I'm afraid this is difficult. I understand. I'm just asking you to summarize and quit commenting on my ability to hear this. I'm doing my best under the circumstances, and I'm trying to move it along. I take it very seriously. Please summarize.

**Mr Cooke:** Mr Speaker, the point that is very clear is that the serious intimidation by the Attorney General of two members of this assembly has never occurred in the time that most of us have been in this House. Mr Speaker, I just ask you to ask the question of how can we, as members of the opposition, come into this place, investigate incidents that come to our attention, and then do that without fear that the Attorney General is going to come in here, announce criminal investigations and then, in addition, the additional incredible action by the Attorney General today of saying in this place that they are guilty of break-and-enter.

**The Speaker:** The member for Windsor-Riverside, I think you make some valid points of order and that's why I've given you my undertaking to reserve judgement on this until a week Monday. I appreciate your input and I think all the input's been honourable and I will consider it. Really, what I'm trying to point out now to the members in the opposition benches: I think you've made the arguments you're going to make; I think your points are fair points. I don't think there's anything new you could add. If there is, I ask for it. But if there isn't, I would much prefer to reserve on this and report back.

**Mr Kormos:** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Please, Speaker, I understand your urgency to — and, again, I'm not being critical but I understand that you want to see matters proceed. I think many of us are shocked by what has transpired and I speak to you, sir, about the breach of my privilege as a member of this assembly. It's going to be necessary, Speaker, to tell you in fact what happened. I tell you that Ms Martel and I attended at the Ministry of Transportation complex and walked through unlocked, unguarded doors and, as it was in the first instance, accompanied by a security guard who appears to have been hired by the Attorney General to conduct security there.

1440

We had been warned about the state of affairs there. We went to confirm whether that was the reality. We discovered a shocking state of affairs. We discovered an absence of security. We discovered unsealed, uncontained boxes of FSP files in hallways accessible to any member of the public, as they were, yes, to us. We videotaped it. We blew the whistle. We held a media conference at 1 o'clock this afternoon where that videotape was made available to members of the press. I consider that one of the obligations of members of a democratic assembly and certainly an obligation of a member of the opposition.

In response to blowing the whistle and disclosing the sordid conditions in Downsview, we are threatened with criminal investigations. I understand criminal investigation and I understand the techniques that can be employed. I understand it means that with no further clarification, Ms Martel and I can expect to be subjected to search warrants in our home, in any other residences we might have in Toronto, in our offices both in our constituencies and here. I understand that a criminal investigation can mean that family members and neighbours and associates can be called upon to be interviewed by police. I understand that wiretap authorizations could be obtained in the course of a criminal investigation.

The reason I list those is to speak about the oppressiveness of that threat. Speaker, I say to you there has been a breach of my privilege as a member, Ms Martel's privilege as a member, by this heavy-handedness in response to candid, wide-open, transparent whistleblowing. I call upon you, Speaker, to use your power to intervene, to restore the privileges that are being denied us by this government.

**The Speaker:** I again tell you I reserve and —

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: It is different.

**The Speaker:** The leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** I want to make sure we understand the full breadth of the issues.

Speaker, what is so serious about this is that two members of the Legislature were attending at a government office after they had asked questions day after day in this House about the operation of that office, about why women and children are not receiving their family support plan cheques, about why they have to go to a food bank to get food because they're not receiving family support plan cheques.

They go to this government office, as I should be able to go to a government office, to make inquiries. They find when they attend at this government office that everything is in a completely insecure state.

**The Speaker:** Can you get to the "different" point of privilege here?

**Mr Hampton:** They find that everything is in a completely insecure state. They find that people's private records and files are open in the hallway, that anybody can have access to them. They find that nothing is being looked after in terms of those files. Then they come here, and in these premises, as part of their democratic responsibility, they hold a press conference to inform their constituents, to inform other people in Ontario about what



is happening and they show a videotape of what's happening.

Then what is unbelievable is that the chief law officer, perhaps the second most powerful person in this province, the second most powerful person in this government, comes into this Legislature and announces that they are under criminal investigation. He announces that this government is going to use —

**The Speaker:** I need a new point of privilege now.

**Mr Hampton:** He announces that this government is prepared to use the ultimate sanction in a democratic jurisdiction: They are prepared to send the police after two elected members for doing their duty.

But that's not the end of it. It is serious enough, Speaker, that the chief law officer of the crown would threaten to send the police —

**The Speaker:** The leader of the third party, order. I ask you to take your seat. I appreciate your point. You're recapping very succinctly, but what I would like in the next few minutes is your new point of privilege, directly and to the point. Thank you.

**Mr Hampton:** Directly. So the first part is calling the police in an effort to use the police against members of the Legislature who are only doing their duty in a democratic society.

The second point, which is very important, is that the Attorney General is the administrator of justice in this province. The Attorney General is never allowed to comment on a case before the court. For the Attorney General to comment on a case before the court would result, ordinarily, in the dismissal of the charge, the dismissal of the case.

Now, the Attorney General walks into this Legislature and he declares that these two members are guilty of a criminal offence. This is absolutely the most outrageous abuse of government privilege, the most outrageous abuse of police, the most outrageous abuse of the criminal justice system that I think you could ever have in a democratic society. Speaker, you have to be concerned with that.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the points of privilege. I understand them very, very completely. I appreciate the fact that you've taken the time now to explain them to me on a number of occasions. I understand them. I reserve; I will come back a week Monday.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** During the course of discussions of these points of privilege, I, in discussion with others, pointed out what was happening to women and children in this province. The member for Durham East across, while he didn't say "Eff off" to me, in fact gestured it with a finger. I think that's entirely inappropriate in this Legislature. It shows that they don't take these issues seriously. I would ask that you request him to withdraw that.

**Mr Cooke:** We saw it, Mr O'Toole.

**The Speaker:** I didn't —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. To the member for Beaches-Woodbine, I'm addressing your point of order. I did not see nor hear that remark or gesture. I would ask the member for Durham East if he chooses to stand and withdraw if he did whatever.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** I deny completely that I made any such remark. I would ask that you withdraw your suggestion that I made any such remark. I am quite displeased with the —

**The Speaker:** Order. That's where we are at that stage: He denies he did it.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I appreciate the situation that you are in. Again, I think the House has an obligation to assist the Chair in this matter. I have no information that allows me to pass judgement on what may or may not have happened at the Downsview family responsibility office, but we do know this afternoon as we gather here in the assembly that there are two members of this House who are currently under criminal investigation. That is rare, not unprecedented, but it is a very rare event in the history of this assembly.

What I am deeply concerned about is that one of our colleagues, the minister of justice, who is the chief law officer for the province, who has a very direct responsibility in these matters, has clearly indicated in the chamber this afternoon that these honourable members, who are apparently under criminal investigation, are in fact guilty. Now, he withdrew, apparently, the remark. But I say to you that the House owes it to the honour and the integrity of this place to assist you in a very difficult situation.

I would say, through you to the government House leader, that I think it would be an extremely useful thing, given the gravity of what the minister of justice has done, if before we adjourn at the normal hour of 6 o'clock today, not to return for 10 days, the minister of justice and the Premier of the province come to this House and give an accounting of themselves, because we simply cannot have a situation where the minister of justice, having announced that honourable members of this place are under criminal investigation, also indicates clearly that, in his view, they are guilty, having broken into government offices in Ontario —

**The Speaker:** Member for Renfrew North, you know full well that's not a point of order. The fact of the matter is it's completely up to the government, and those ministers are here, I assume, who are here, and those who are aren't, aren't.

The member for Algoma.

1450

**Mr Wildman:** We have two matters. One I won't go into — it's been dealt with at length here — but the second one in a way is even more grave. The Attorney General, who has just returned, said in interjecting that these two members, who he had previously announced were under investigation, had broken in. As minister of justice, he is passing judgement in that kind of a statement on their guilt or innocence. He then subsequently got up and withdrew the statement, which in fact is an admission he made such a statement. How can we, as an assembly, operate if the chief law officer of the crown is passing judgement on something that is just under investigation? This is a very, very serious matter and the Attorney General knows the implication of that kind of a comment better than anyone else here. We would like to hear what he intends to do to rectify this situation —



**The Speaker:** Order. I really appreciate the points of privilege and points of order. I think they're exhausted. We can now move to oral questions. I say to the member for Algoma —

**Mr Wildman:** We can't leave this for 10 days.

**The Speaker:** Member for Algoma, that may make a very good oral question. I don't want to direct your party on how to work in this place. What I think we need to do now — I understand the points of privilege and points of order. I appreciate the gravity of the situation. You must allow me the opportunity to report back to this Legislature. Now let us move to oral questions.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr Speaker —

**The Speaker:** It's a point of order you're looking for?

**Mrs McLeod:** It's a point in terms of what I guess we now need from the Speaker. I wasn't present in the House when the interjection took place; I cannot verify what was and was not said. But I do think it's imperative that you make every effort as Speaker of this assembly to determine what was and was not said. If it were anyone other than the Attorney General, it might have different implications, but if there was any judgemental statement in the case of a criminal investigation made by the Attorney General, it's my understanding that there would be significant implications for the carriage of justice.

**The Speaker:** I leave you in no doubt that in the interim I will do just that.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** In the absence of the Premier and the Minister of Health, I'll address my question to the government House leader. Minister, this morning and yesterday Ontarians learned for the first time that Mike Harris's promise not to cut one cent from health care really, even more than we realized before, just doesn't hold any water. Your hospital closing commission said yesterday unequivocally that it's planning even deeper cuts to our health care system. Somehow that original \$1.3 billion just wasn't enough.

Minister, your government is planning to close more hospitals. You're planning to lay off more nurses. You're planning to force more patients home when they should still be in a hospital for service after surgery or after delivering a baby. Minister, why didn't Mike Harris bother to tell the people during the last election that his plan to protect health care meant patients would be kicked out of hospitals just hours after emergency surgery and just hours after delivering a baby? How long will it be before we know the full extent of your cuts and what it means to people in communities throughout Ontario?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** I would remind the member opposite, number one, the only government reducing funding in health care in the province of Ontario is the federal government from Ottawa — some \$2 billion in reduced health care funding in the province of Ontario over the next couple of years.

This government, the provincial government, through the election agreed to allocate \$17.4 billion to health care funding in the province of Ontario, and indeed this year we have exceeded that amount of funding — some \$17.7 billion.

This government is not laying off nurses; this government indeed did not close 8,400 beds since 1989 in the province of Ontario. Those closures of 8,400 beds came from the party opposite and the third party. Indeed, the restructuring commission in the province is investigating efficiencies within the hospital system and looking at reinvestments.

**Mr Duncan:** The minister has absolutely no credibility and the people of this province don't trust you or your government with their hospitals or their health care system. Everything you've said just doesn't reflect or even come close to what's being said by independent observers right across the province.

This morning the House leader wasn't here, but Conservative members of the Legislature attempted to defeat my private member's bill, which would have entrenched the five principles of the Canada Health Act in provincial legislation. To remind the minister, those principles that the Conservatives voted against were universality, portability, accessibility, comprehensiveness and a publicly administered plan.

Minister, knowing that the Canada Health Act is the only thing preventing you and your government and Harris from bringing in extra billing, imposing more American-style user fees and creating a two-tier health care system, can you tell me why members of your government and your caucus voted against that bill, which would have guaranteed in legislation the principles of the Canada Health Act in this province?

**Hon David Johnson:** What I can tell the member opposite is that this government has reinvested in health care in Ontario. This government has committed to \$170 million in community-based front-line services to seniors in Ontario, which will create some 4,400 front-line jobs in Ontario. This government has invested in kidney dialysis services, in cardiac surgery equipment, in expanded diabetes care. This government has made investment after investment in Ontario. Where the expenditure reductions have come, where the cutbacks have come in health care in Ontario has been from the federal Liberal government.

**Mr Duncan:** One of your members was kind enough to provide me with a briefing note that was distributed to all Conservative members of Parliament before the debate on my private member's bill today. Let me read to you what the final point in that says. It says, "There will be an attempt to block the voting on this bill, thereby allowing it to die without going to committee." What you're allowing to die is public health care in this country. What you're allowing to die in this province is accessibility to public health care in this province.

What will you say when you began and continue to undermine our public health care system? Will you now acknowledge, as you did in the Common Sense Revolution, that it's not federal transfer cuts but in fact your own desire to impose an American-style user-pay health care system in Ontario? What will you say and how do



you respond to your own government's notes that told your backbenchers how to vote and even took away their right as members to respond effectively and honestly to a piece of legislation that your government promised to protect?

**Hon David Johnson:** How I would respond is that indeed this province is fully in compliance with the Canada Health Act and that's why, for example, we reinstated the out-of-country coverage for seniors. This government, through the election and while in its term in government, has put health care as the number one priority for investment in Ontario.

I think that indeed if we were to ask most people in Ontario, given the fact that this government has set a budget of \$17.7 billion in spending this year, more than any time previously, the people of Ontario would say, "That's a good investment in health care in Ontario." If we were to say to the people of Ontario, "We've invested \$170 million or are about to invest \$170 million in community care," people of Ontario would say, "That's a fine investment and shows a government that is concerned about health care in Ontario."

1500

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I know you have the next question. I just would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today the honorary Consul General of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Honourable Robert Caplan, and the member of the Russian Parliament and Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Labour and Social Policy, Mr Sergey Kalashnikov. Welcome.

#### ATTORNEY GENERAL'S COMMENTS

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** I have a question for the Attorney General. Today is a very sad day in the Legislature. A number of very serious allegations have been alleged against colleagues and members of this assembly and against yourself. Attorney General, could you confirm what you said in interjections?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** There was an incident today at the family support plan office in Downsview. It was a serious incident. The incident was assessed very carefully by officials who work within the family support plan and those officials, because of the gravity of what they believe has transpired at the Downsview office, contacted the police to advise them and the police are investigating. Beyond that, that is the information I have.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** What did you withdraw in this House?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order, member for Algoma.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** They called the police all by themselves, Charlie?

**The Speaker:** And the member for Hamilton Centre. We are rotating in question period. The opportunity will arise.

**Mr Duncan:** Attorney General, we understood you to imply that the members who are alleged to have partici-

pated in a crime were in fact guilty. Is our understanding of that in fact correct, and if not, what in fact did you withdraw?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I at no time in this House or outside have accused any member of anything. What I did say is that I had been advised earlier of a serious incident which involved —

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I had been advised of a serious incident which involved a potential allegation of a break-in at the family support office in Downsview. As a result of that, officials of the family support plan contacted police to investigate. There is a grave concern that people in the family support plan have that files that were there were viewed and boxes may have been opened. They are very concerned and have asked the police to investigate a potential break-in situation at the Downsview family support plan office.

**Mr Duncan:** Attorney General, the matter is now clearly focused on your interjection and, as the chief attorney in this province, the allegation that you've tried and convicted two members of this Legislature is very serious. Would you not now deem it appropriate to resign and step aside in order that a fair hearing of this can occur and in order that justice in this province be properly served? Will you resign until this matter is cleared up?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I won't resign. What I said was merely in response to what someone else was interjecting and the response to that interjection was to say nothing more than what I said in my answers that I've just provided. I said that there was —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I caution the members opposite that the Attorney General is speaking. It's difficult to hear. I think you want to hear the answers and I'd appreciate being able to do that.

**Mr Christopherson:** Make him tell the truth.

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Hamilton Centre, I'm afraid that is out of order. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr Christopherson:** I withdraw, Speaker.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I said, in response to an interjection, there was a break-in. That is precisely the information I have been given and that is precisely why, because that potentially is what occurred, the officials of the family support plan have called the Metropolitan Toronto Police to investigate. They are concerned, quite simply, because confidential files may have been looked at and viewed. I said there was a break-in. That is what I said. I said that in response to an allegation that was made to me, "Why did you call the police?" and that is what I said in response to another comment that was made.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** Hansard will probably show the details of the Attorney General's remarks, but there are some discrepancies even between what he's told us just now and what he says in his written statement. He told us just now that the officials at the family responsibility office called police, that officials at the family responsibility office looked into this and asked the police to get involved. But in his written statement, which he read in this House earlier today, he said, "For this reason, we have taken the following steps:" — "we" meaning the Attorney General — "The



Metropolitan Toronto Police have been contacted and are conducting a criminal investigation."

The issue here is this: The Attorney General today was confronted with the facts about the family support plan office. He was confronted with the fact that it is not operating, confronted with the fact that the files are not secure. Then he comes in here and says, "We have taken the following steps," called the Metropolitan Toronto Police and had them conduct a criminal investigation. Then what he said was that two members are guilty.

**The Speaker:** Leader of the third party, I appreciate that. I think we can go to the Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Mr Speaker, I never at any time said the two members are guilty.

When the leader of the third party uses "we," of course it's "we." When the public guardian and trustee who is responsible for the family support plan office is advised by security people at that office of an incident that occurred that involved people who are in the office and are not authorized to be there early in the morning, and there was a concern expressed about the confidentiality of records, when the public guardian and trustee notified the police, that is something I, as the Attorney General, am part of because it's something that happens out of the Ministry of the Attorney General. That's quite simply the response and that's why the word "we" was there.

**Mr Hampton:** To go back to the words the Attorney General uttered in this House and withdrew, that does not take back the taint of what he said as the chief law officer of the crown. He said, in speaking to two members of this Legislature, "You broke in."

I want to ask the Attorney General — it sounds to us as if you have already judged. You've already set yourself up as judge in this case. It sounds to us as if you've already set yourself up as judge. Do you think it's appropriate for an Attorney General to make those remarks about two people who you know, because you're involved, are under investigation by the police? Do you think it's appropriate for the Attorney General of the province to make those remarks?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Government members, I appreciate this is an issue that's becoming more heated, but it's very difficult to maintain decorum. I would ask the members to realize that, please.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** This is an incident that involves the Ministry of the Attorney General. The Ministry of the Attorney General is concerned because people without authorization were in the building looking, potentially, at files. Because of that concern, officials at the Ministry of the Attorney General contacted the police. They did that because of what they perceived to have been happening at an office of the Ministry of the Attorney General where confidential files were kept. They have contacted the police. The police independently look into these allegations and they deal with the situation as they see fit without any interference from the Ministry of the Attorney General. The anomaly here happens to be that it was a building that the Ministry of the Attorney General occupied where confidential files were stored and we happened, through the assistant deputy minister and public guardian and trustee, to contact the police.

1510

**Mr Hampton:** I want to ask the Attorney General one further question on this general area. If someone were under investigation, let us say for impaired driving, would it be proper for the Attorney General to say they were impaired while driving? Would it be proper for the Attorney General to say that? Because that's what you've done in this House. You have said something which totally changes the complexion of what may or may not have happened this morning, because you have tried to exercise the role of judge. Is it proper for an Attorney General to do that?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The member puts an interesting question to me. The fact is that in those particular incidents the Attorney General has no role to play, just as the Attorney General has no role to play in this investigation. The Attorney General —

**Mr Christopherson:** You said they did it.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** But inherent in anything that I may have said was the fact that it was the Attorney General and I take responsibility for the fact that the public guardian and trustee, who's also the assistant deputy minister, called the police because we believed something had happened on a property and premise. When they phoned the police because there was a perceived break-in and there was a concern with confidentiality, that is a very —

**Mr Christopherson:** This is an abuse of power. It's outrageous.

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Hamilton Centre, you're going to have to come to order. It's very difficult and I would warn you right now that you'll have to come to order.

New question.

#### FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I want to get to the heart of the issues that happened this morning. Two of our members called at a government office and what they found is something totally contradictory to what you've been saying. They found that files, family support plan files, were lying in the open in the hallway. They found cases of family support plan files that can't be worked upon, aren't being worked upon. They found an office which you have told this House was going to be up and operating at the end of October which is completely non-operational.

Yes, we've got it in Hansard and we've got it in your response. This is what the Attorney General said on October 11 — information to all MPPs. He said, "Until the Downsview site is fully operational at the end of October." That's what you said in your memo to all MPPs on October 11, 1996.

What they found is an office that is completely non-operational. Are you prepared to admit now that the reason why women and children across this province, hundreds of them, are not receiving their family support plan cheques is because the family support plan office there isn't operational, isn't able to do the work because you've shut it all down?



**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I can tell the member, if he's interested in the answer, that last week we processed \$7.1 million of cheques. We are doing that work out of 55 Yonge Street. We have closed all of the regional offices, and four of the floors of the Downsview centre are now complete, the work stations have been built, the files have been brought in and the files have been unpacked and put away. There are still —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Supplementary, member for London Centre.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Let's just talk about a case that we've talked about at great length in this House, the case of my constituent Wendy Taylor. Wendy Taylor from London, who never had any problems with the plan, has not received any payments since you decided to centralize it. Wendy is in financial distress — I detailed that in this House — because of her inability to access funds for family support, funds that have been deducted from her ex-partner's cheque.

On October 30, my constituency office staff were told by the family support plan staff that Wendy Taylor's files were in transit from the regional office and therefore they could not access the court orders and other documents relevant to this case, as well as many other cases. In fact, I have a printout in my office from the family support office stating: "We need to follow up. Need file to get contact person."

I don't think it's farfetched for me, as a member of this Legislature, to assume that the reason my constituent is not getting the dollars she needs to feed her children is because you have made such a mess of the family support plan, and her file is probably in those piles of files and is not accessible to whoever it is you have answering the phone —

**The Speaker:** Member for London Centre, come to order. The Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Mr Speaker, as I've indicated, four of the regional offices have now been completely moved into the Downsview centre. There are still —

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Completely moved in? Charles, look at the video. There are boxes in the hallway. Women and children are not getting money because you won't take action to clean this up.

*Interjection.*

**Ms Lankin:** Janet, as a woman you should care about this. As Minister of Community and Social Services, you should be doing something to make sure that these women and children are getting their money. I don't need this from you; the women and children of this province don't need this from you.

**The Speaker:** Member for Beaches-Woodbine, come to order please. Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Mr Speaker, as I've said, four of the regional offices have now been completely moved into the Downsview centre. There is further work to do to complete the work to transfer the files from the other regional offices. We have endeavoured, through the office at 55 Yonge Street, to maintain the essential services during this transition. We are doing that, and as I've said earlier, we processed \$7.1 million worth of cheques last week.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I'd like to say to the Attorney General that there is no transition; there is only chaos. The Sudbury office closed three weeks ago. Ten boxes of unopened mail was sent somewhere into Toronto to be dealt with by someone at some time. At the office today, we saw boxes and boxes of files still in the Allied Van Lines boxes. There's nothing going on at that office. It is complete chaos.

I want you to tell me what I should tell Linda Carter today about her case. She's got two children, two and a half and four and a half years old. She regularly got payments of \$300 a month. Her last cheque was on August 20, 1996. We confirmed with the employer that indeed the money was remitted to the Sudbury regional office. We tried contacting FSP on November 1; they were going to follow up with the employer. We tried again yesterday; they were going to follow up with the employer. She still doesn't have a cent.

How can you justify the crisis that is happening in the family support plan now, due directly to your cuts in staff and the closures of the regional offices?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As I've indicated to this member before, if she has a specific problem, I am prepared to take that to the —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Attorney General?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As I have indicated to this House before, the family support plan has been a major problem in terms of the way clients —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Attorney General?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** To conclude, I hope that the members opposite have the same passion for passing the bill that's now before the House so that we can correct the problems in the family support plan once and for all.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** I wish you'd shut up so we can hear.

**The Speaker:** Member for Kitchener, that's unparliamentary language. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I withdraw.

1520

#### PARENT-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Education and Training. Today a group of parents from Franklin community school delivered this letter to the Premier. Their letter expresses their concern with an incident which they feel constitutes a serious interference with the administration of justice.

These parents, on behalf of their parent-school association, had engaged a lawyer with funds which they raised through contributions from their own pockets. They asked the lawyer, who was another parent at Franklin school, to act on their behalf in raising concerns about the subpanel on education that was set up under the Who Does What committee. These parents were prepared to challenge the legality of the work of the subcommittee, the constitution of the subcommittee, and in fact were prepared to seek an injunction against the work of the subcommittee.



The lawyer whom they had engaged was subsequently asked by the chairman of his law firm, a leading law firm here in the city of Toronto, to withdraw from the case. He was also instructed to write a letter to Steve Lowden of the subpanel on education in which he would withdraw the representations he had made on behalf of his clients. This requirement that he drop the case and that he write this letter was made because a call had come from the province to a senior member in the firm.

Minister, I'm sure you would agree that this does constitute a serious violation of the rights of individuals to express concerns and to have legal representation. I ask whether you are aware of this situation and I ask whether your office made the call.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. However, this question deals with the Who Does What committee and I would defer this question to the minister to whom that committee is responsible.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I could add some light to this question. Yes, the Who Does What panel did receive a letter indicating that the law firm of Cassels Brock was going to impose an injunction on the Crombie subpanel on education. The application seemed so frivolous that my executive assistant called Cassels Brock and said, "Are you serious?" They said: "We're not aware of this at all. We'll get back to you." We never heard any more about it until such time as we got a letter from the lawyer in question withdrawing the application. That's all we know.

**Mrs McLeod:** I must confess I am surprised we would so quickly get an admission from the minister that his office contacted the law firm. I trust he is now aware of the results of that direct intervention in legal representation on the part of a group of citizens who wanted to raise concerns about this government's actions, that this kind of direct intervention with a law firm has not only resulted in this particular lawyer being required to drop the case, but that these citizens have lost their legal representation because the lawyer was required to withdraw his representation on their behalf. These citizens have now been denied both their right to raise their concerns and their right to legal representation because of direct intimidation from your office.

Minister, these citizens believed when they came into this place today — and they are here — that they had been bullied into silence by your government. They asked in a letter to the Premier why this government believes it is free to manipulate the law. Do you not consider this to be a direct interference with the rights of citizens to be heard and to have legal representation? Is this not —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

**Hon Mr Leach:** That's even a stretch for that party. We made an inquiry as to whether this was a serious allegation. The law firm said they didn't know about it.

By the way —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. I appreciate the fact that the member asked the question. I presume you'd like to hear the answer.

**Hon Mr Leach:** By the way, so everybody's aware, this is the law firm of the former leader of the Liberal Party, David Peterson. If anybody thinks we're going to call and try to intimidate a law firm like that, it is rather silly. There was absolutely no attempt to intimidate anybody. We made an inquiry whether this was serious. We didn't hear any more after that. What the law firm does is their business. If they're that easily intimidated they're not very good lawyers.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I want to return to the Attorney General with respect to the family support plan. To date in our office we have received over 80 enquiries on cases from women and children right across Sudbury East. We received all of our cases and we reviewed them last week, and I can tell you that the overwhelming majority of those cases involved women and children who used to receive regular support payments until you cut 290 staff and closed the regional office.

Three weeks ago 10 boxes of unopened mail left the Sudbury office to be dealt with somewhere in Toronto. No doubt, thousands of other files have also come to Toronto and were probably among the boxes that we saw today on the fourth floor, totally unsecured, all over the floor in a public area.

I want to ask you today: What are you going to do, since your office is completely non-functioning at this point in time, to ensure that the thousands of women and children across this province, who aren't receiving support because of your cuts, are going to get some money today so they can look after and support their own families?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** The fact that we processed \$7.1 million in cheques last week, and that we will in all likelihood process more than that this week and again more than that next week, belies the fact that the family support plan isn't working.

We have been going through this transition. We hope we will be through the transition very shortly. We've hired 160 people who will be working on the front lines to deal with client problems. We are working our way through this transition and hope to be in a position to deal with this in a permanent way very shortly.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Perhaps this is one of the cases that's lost in your files in the Allied Van Lines boxes in this office.

Patricia Dorn, Bruce Mines in my constituency, contacted the Sudbury office, sent the forms to the Sudbury office in May because the payee, her ex-spouse, was a month behind. It was not processed because the Sudbury office was getting ready to close as per your order.

Since that time Ms Dorn has had to get two jobs because she hasn't been receiving her payments. She's working at two part-time jobs. She has two children, 13 and 10, who are supposed to be supported. She's left messages on the answering machine. She hasn't received any answers. She says her children would like to have lunches when they go to school. That's what she said on



the answering machine. That was two weeks ago. She has yet to get a response from your office.

What are you doing about all of those Allied Van Lines boxes that have the files stacked up in this so-called superoffice of yours?

1530

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Every day people working there are taking the files out of the boxes and putting them on shelves in the proper places as we set up the office. But I can't comment directly on the individual the member refers to.

I can't comment directly on what the member says, but I do know there are a couple of interesting aspects to his question. One is that it's a case that's in arrears. So I don't know, from what he says, whether money is flowing in that case.

**Mr Wildman:** She hasn't had any money since August.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I don't know whether money is flowing in that case.

The other thing the member said was that the office was closed in May. In fact, the office didn't close until September. I don't know about whether money is flowing, but I will say to the member that I will ensure that we look into the case to try to determine whether money is flowing.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** A point of privilege.

**The Speaker:** Pardon me. I would prefer that we deal with the point of privilege after question period. If it's anything you want to take up during question period, you may, but I prefer that points of privilege be taken up after question period and not use time on the clock.

**Mr Duncan:** I'd prefer that it be taken up now. It relates directly to what was just said.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate what you're saying, but I'd prefer to deal with it after question period.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. My constituents in St Andrew-St Patrick and residents right across Metro are following with great interest reports on what's going to happen on the so-called supercity. Can you confirm for me the accuracy of press reports lately on whether you have given the six area mayors 30 days to come up with proposals on governance and the delivery of services in and right across Metro? How accurate is that?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** It is quite accurate. When the mayors wrote to the Premier a week ago and indicated they would like 30 days to prepare a report on how they could reduce the size of council by 50% and how they could increase efficiency and how they could integrate services, I indicated at that time I would be more than pleased to have them take that action and work in parallel with us. I indicated at the time that we would not stop our course of action but that we would work in parallel, and if they produced something that proved to be better than the proposal we're considering, we would certainly consider it.

**Ms Bassett:** Minister, can you tell us when I can inform my constituents —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order, the member for St Andrew-St Patrick.

A point of order?

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Standing order 21 says: "(a) Privileges are the rights enjoyed by the House...."

"(b) Whenever a matter of privilege arises, it shall be taken into consideration immediately."

**The Speaker:** I'm sorry, I didn't hear the number.

**Mr Duncan:** With respect to standing order 21(b), "Whenever a matter of privilege arises, it shall be taken into consideration immediately."

**The Speaker:** With respect to the member for Windsor-Walkerville, I appreciate the point of privilege on page 14 that you outline. I myself have expressed my privilege in the past that points of privilege during question period take up time of question period; I prefer to have them deferred till after question period. If the member would like to take up his point of privilege and refer to the matter and deal with it specifically at this time, I can't stop that, but I can also say to you that if I take your point of privilege, I am almost certain there will be other points of privilege and we'll probably wipe out the rest of the time left in question period. Your point of privilege.

**Mr Duncan:** Pass.

**The Speaker:** Pass? Supplementary, the member for St Andrew-St Patrick.

**Ms Bassett:** Minister, to resume, if I could just pick up there, when are you going to inform us of your decision on this issue?

**Hon Mr Leach:** On November 30 when we receive the report from the mayors and when we receive the advice from the Crombie panel and take it through cabinet and of course caucus, I'll report as quickly as we can after that.

## HIGHWAY 416

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South):** Earlier today representatives from each of the three parties spoke very eloquently and in a compelling way — my question is to the Minister of Transportation — in a compelling and moving way about the importance of hanging on to the memory of sacrifices made by previous generations of Canadians in wars. Behind me earlier today were 100 veterans who served in our wars, many of whom have gone home because of the length of time it's taken to come to this question, but none the less, they were here in support for the following question I put to the minister.

Minister, you will know that over a year and a half, I guess, or some 13 or 14 months ago now I raised this issue and I'm coming back to it today. In one way it's of no great moment, but in other ways of tremendous importance to our Canadian veterans. There's a highway that you're building between Ottawa and the 401; it's the 416. Canadian veterans are asking that you dedicate that highway to the memory of those who served in past wars. They want it to be called the Canadian Veterans Memorial Parkway. Will you do that?



**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I certainly sympathize with the intent and sentiment behind the request and I want to assure the honourable member that this government certainly appreciates all the support from the veterans and we do support veterans and a gesture of that nature obviously would be something of great value. Colleagues on this side of the House have also approached me on that matter. I would like to say to the member, in due time, certainly we would give it consideration, but right now I really want to finish the highway, I want to build it so that we can get Ontarians on it —

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** Give it a yea.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Just say yes.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Supplementary, member for Ottawa South; and members for Oriole and Kingston and The Islands, thank you.

**Mr McGuinty:** First of all, I appreciate the minister is giving this some consideration, but really I see no legitimate obstacle in the way. The veterans themselves, as the minister knows, have offered to pay for any signage connected with this. There are 450,000 veterans throughout Canada in support of this particular cause. I have over 4,300 individually signed letters from veterans across Canada, which I will shortly deliver to you.

We heard earlier today representations made by members of all three parties about the importance of hanging on to the memory. Here is a way for your government to do more than merely talk the talk, you could walk the walk by simply saying that you are committing to dedicating the 416 to the memory of Canadian veterans by naming it the Canadian Veterans Memorial Parkway. Will you do that, Minister?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** Again, I really do appreciate the member's question and the validity and the importance of it, but the identification of a provincial highway is normally done by a number. This is an international standard and it's a Canadian standard as well. We will —

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I would like to put on Hansard the original answer that I gave the honourable member. I will stand by that answer.

#### ATTORNEY GENERAL'S COMMENTS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have another question for the Attorney General. You were confronted today with some information about just how badly the family support plan office in Downsview is in disarray and in chaos, yet you came into this Legislature and your response was to announce that a police investigation is being conducted. Then you made some comments to two of my colleagues which you later withdrew. Will you tell us again what those comments were and will you tell us why you made those comments?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** As I indicated before, what I said was that the police were called. They were called by the public guardian and trustee who is the assistant deputy minister. The reason they were called is because they believed there was a break-in. When I was

asked, "Why were the police called?" I said it was because there was a break-in. That is why the Ministry of the Attorney General contacted the police in this instance.

1540

**Mr Hampton:** We heard the Attorney General say in very clear language "because you broke in" with reference to the member for Welland-Thorold and the member for Sudbury East. The Attorney General later withdrew those remarks. I want to ask the Attorney General, does it not seem to you, as the minister of justice for this province, that you have in effect already judged these two members of the Legislature by a comment like that, and do you not admit that comment is completely improper within the bounds of the administration of justice of Ontario?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** It is not for the Attorney General to make those judgements. As I indicated, this case involved a break-in, or an alleged break-in, to a premise that was occupied by the Ministry of the Attorney General. Ministry officials called the police. In fact, we all know who was involved because they've admitted they were there. Quite simply, the facts are that the ministry called the police to investigate a situation involving people in a building that was occupied by the Attorney General.

#### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** My question is for the Minister of Education and Training. In my riding I've had the opportunity to speak to many groups and individuals about your anticipated reforms in education, and one of the greatest concerns people have is that it could threaten the size of classes. I overheard this week the leader of the third party who raised allegations about teacher reductions at the Atikokan separate school board. Have you investigated those allegations and, if so, can you inform the House on your findings, please?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** In fact, I have had a chance to look into the Atikokan separate school board, the board that was mentioned by the leader of the third party yesterday.

The leader of the third party has had a lot to say today about accuracy. I was surprised to find, when we did some research, that this board did indeed have its budget cut by \$10,000 and it did indeed lose half a teacher, but for the record, those cuts were due to the social contract that was imposed by the leader of the third party's party when it was in power. Moreover, in the interests of accuracy, this isolate board sets its own budget, and the principal is responsible to organize classes and staff allocation. This is very different than what was represented by the leader of the third party yesterday.

I would beseech the leader of the third party: This is twice in two weeks that he's been misled by his research department. I would ask him to get his research right and to be accurate in the House for fear of misleading the people of Ontario.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Would you ask the minister to repeat that again slowly.



**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Leader of the third party, you don't have the floor. Supplementary.

**Mr Grimmett:** Minister, one of the questions that's often asked of me by people in the educational institutions in my riding is, "Why is it really necessary for us to embark on reforms of education?" Can you provide an answer to the people in my riding to that question?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I thank the honourable member for the question. There are a number of reforms that are necessary in our education system if we're to create the kind of quality, the kind of affordability and accountability that we want and the people of Ontario want in the school system. But I can tell you that our burden in creating these reforms was certainly increased by the third party when they were in power because of the very deep financial concerns of the province and because of the financial problems within the school system.

I'm displeased to inform the member that despite the fact that the third party was in power for five years, we came to power and found a system of funding where there are second-class students in the province of Ontario, where in fact the spending differs by as much as 30% between students, so that some teachers in Ontario don't have the same materials and resources as other teachers. If you take the deficit that was left by the third party, divide it by the number of students in this province, you'll find that the third party left a \$46,600 debt for every student in this province and it's up to this party to reverse that.

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Solicitor General. It has to do with Ipperwash and the behaviour of the Conservative member for the area, Mr Beaubien.

The Solicitor General will know that we've now had it confirmed that Mr Beaubien was at the OPP command post at least four times during this very tense situation. We also have had it confirmed that he told the commanding officer that he was in constant contact with the Premier's office and the ministries involved, including your ministry. We've had it confirmed that he told the commanding officer four hours before the shooting at this tense command post where the OPP was attempting to manage a very difficult situation — Mr Beaubien was right in the middle of all of this tactical work and he said to the commanding officer that he had sent a fax to the Premier advising the Premier of his intentions and that he was awaiting a return call from the Premier on his intentions.

The question, Solicitor General, is this: Is this acceptable behaviour for a member of your caucus, or do you not believe that it is inappropriate for a member of the Conservative caucus to be at a sensitive police command post four times during a very, very difficult situation for the police?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I think it's appropriate, if there was a crisis in any particular riding held by any member in this assembly, that the member would

want to be kept apprised of what was occurring. With respect to this particular situation, I know the member is continually attempting to suggest that there was some sort of undue influence imparted by the member in terms of his presence at the police headquarters.

I want to say once again, which the Premier has said and others have said on a number of occasions, quite clearly, if there was a problem, the OPP have not indicated that. The commissioner of the OPP, following completion of the SIU investigation, stated quite clearly, categorically, that there was no attempt at influencing the operating decisions of the OPP on the ground.

**Mr Phillips:** Firstly, I think it is inexcusable that a member of the Conservative caucus was at a command post four times over a tense situation and was essentially saying to those people, "I'm in constant touch with the Premier, Solicitor General and the Attorney General."

I want to follow up on the comments you just made about Commissioner O'Grady's response, because I gather Commissioner O'Grady has looked completely at this situation. Can you confirm that Commissioner O'Grady has talked to Mr Beaubien, has reviewed what Mr Beaubien found out at the command post and has assured himself that Mr Beaubien did not find out anything was going on there of a tactical nature and he did not inform anyone else about what was going on there? Can you confirm that Commissioner O'Grady — because this is important — has interviewed Mr Beaubien and is satisfied that Mr Beaubien violated none of the principles that he espouses?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I suggest that the member talk directly to the commissioner. The commissioner is an individual whom I have the utmost confidence in and respect for, who served under three different governments, and if there's a suggestion that the commissioner had somehow not thoroughly investigated this matter, I want to suggest that he take that up with the commissioner, because that's a slight on the commissioner of the OPP, a very well-respected individual in this province, right across this country, right throughout North America. He has indicated very clearly, it's on the record for everyone to see or read if they want to, rather than trying to make a political issue out of something that is not there, that there was absolutely no political interference.

1550

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is also to the Solicitor General. Yesterday I requested that the Premier release the faxes that the member for Lambton sent to the Premier's office. The Premier responded, "I have no difficulty with that kind of information being public."

It is also our understanding that the member for Lambton sent the same faxes regarding the Ipperwash situation to the office of the Solicitor General. Minister, could you tell us what information was contained in those faxes from the member for Lambton that your office received, and will you release them publicly today?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I'm not aware of the faxes. We'll certainly review this with my staff. I can only indicate that the member and I did speak on a number of occasions, and his concerns were centred around the concerns of residents in his riding, primarily with respect to break-



and-enters that were occurring. In fact, in mid-September I travelled to the riding at the request of the member and met with a whole range of local residents and elected officials to hear their concerns on a person-to-person basis.

My knowledge of the member's concerns is that they were all centred around his constituents and that he was simply relaying the concerns of constituents to me, which is an appropriate thing for a member of the assembly to do.

**Mr Hampton:** I asked a simple question. I wanted to know about the faxes and if the Solicitor General was prepared to release them.

The reason I asked that is because in the OPP log it states — it's odd that it would state this in the OPP log — the log of September 6, 1995, 1842 hours, states that MPP Marcel Beaubien was meeting in the command post with Inspector Linton and Inspector Carson. It also states, "Marcel (Beaubien) advised that he had sent a fax to the Premier advising of his intentions and that he wanted a return phone call regarding his intentions."

This raises, I believe, the issue of political interference, whether it is real or perceived on the part of the police officers, who were well aware that the member for Lambton was communicating with the Premier's office and was awaiting a reply.

Will you inquire into these faxes? It seems strange that they would appear in a police log. Will you inquire into these faxes, when they were sent, when they were received and what they were about?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I will.

#### WASTE REDUCTION WEEK

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. As you know, this is Waste Reduction Week in Ontario. I would like to ask the minister how many communities are involved in this initiative and how significant this week is to Ontarians across the province.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** Waste Reduction Week is a very important week for over 150 communities across the province. This is a great testament to how far —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Member for Welland-Thorold. Thank you.

It's an important question, I'm sure, to the member for Hamilton West, and I think we owe her the decency to listen to the answer.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I'm glad that so many members are interested in Waste Reduction Week, because it is an important week for Ontario: 150 communities are participating in this. This is a testament to the programs we have had here in Ontario, including such things as the blue box program. This program itself diverts 500,000 tonnes of waste from our landfill sites. It helps to show us the tremendous difference that waste reduction initiatives can make.

Another important aspect of this is the partnerships that have come together to address this situation. As Minister of Environment I want to expand this partnership that has been developed in the past.

I just want to make one specific example of one of these new partnerships. The Canadian Battery Association has come forward with a proposal to implement a fully funded —

**The Speaker:** Minister of Environment, that's fine. I appreciate your response. I'm sure everyone appreciated your response.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Sit down. You've got to stand in line.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: In response to a question about the family support plan and the needs of members dealing with the fallout from the completely incompetent handling of the consolidation, the Attorney General's office set up a so-called hotline to get issues dealt with quickly. Just the other day I had a fax dealing with issues that were more than a month old and I wanted to point out that one of my constituents was evicted as a result of not being able to collect from that hotline.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the comments, but it is not a point of privilege.

The Minister of Environment had a point of privilege?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Mr Speaker, I don't have a point of privilege either.

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Orile):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I have a concern that I'd like to draw to your attention. Under the standing orders, the members of this House are able to table order paper questions and the government is obliged to respond; I believe under the standing orders it is within two weeks.

I want to bring to your attention that there are order paper questions dating back to May 1996. It is now November 7 and I'd ask that you use your good offices. I'm referring to one in particular, order paper number 348, an inquiry of the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services: Would the minister respond to "each recommendation made by the Commission on Systemic Racism that affects the ministry." That was dated April 24, 1996, and there was an interim answer tabled May 8 with the approximate available information, but since it is still listed here in the orders I'm wondering whether or not it's reasonable for members of the opposition to expect that there will be additional information tabled.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I appreciate your point of order. Those should be responded to in a timely fashion and I will take it under consideration. Motions.

#### MOTIONS

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I move we proceed to orders of the day.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The government House leader moves that we proceed to orders of the day.



All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. There will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1558 to 1627.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Members take their seats, please.

Mr Johnson has moved that we proceed to orders of the day.

All those in favour will please stand and remain standing.

All those opposed will please stand and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 57; the nays are 17.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** We're directly into orders of the day. I must proceed with that, then I will take your point of order.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

ALCOHOL, GAMING AND CHARITY  
FUNDING PUBLIC INTEREST ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 RÉGISSANT LES ALCOOLS,  
LES JEUX ET LE FINANCEMENT  
DES ORGANISMES DE BIENFAISANCE  
DANS L'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for third reading of Bill 75, An Act to regulate alcohol and gaming in the public interest, to fund charities through the responsible management of video lotteries and to amend certain statutes related to alcohol and gaming / *Projet de loi 75, Loi réglementant les alcools et les jeux dans l'intérêt public, prévoyant le financement des organismes de bienfaisance grâce à la gestion responsable des loteries vidéo et modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait aux alcools et aux jeux.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for London Centre has the floor.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask for unanimous consent to revert to debating Bill 82 rather than Bill 75 considering the Attorney General's desire today in the House that we should debate that legislation. Why not deal with it now and have this thing out right now?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I understand the point of order the member for Algoma has moved. I would ask, is there unanimous consent to proceed? No. There not being —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The member for London Centre has the floor.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I'm glad that I have the floor because one of the issues that has arisen in this House today is similar to the issue that has arisen with respect to Bill 75. This government is playing fast and loose with the administration of justice in this province. This government said the reason that it was bringing in legal VLTs in this province was because it

would solve the problem of illegality around VLTs. That is not the case. They now are claiming that they never intended to put VLTs in every bar and restaurant in the province. I wonder what Mr Oliver, who's the director of the Ontario Restaurant Association, would say about that, because he certainly had a different impression.

We should be doing Bill 82 here. We should be debating an issue that has arisen in this House, an issue that the government claims is important to us. We got a taunt from the minister, who has created absolute havoc with the administration of justice in this province this afternoon in this place, saying, "Then let's debate Bill 82." Since the government is not prepared to debate Bill 82, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Speaker:** The member for London Centre has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It'll be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1632 to 1702.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Members take their seats, please.

The member for London Centre moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 16, the nays are 50.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

**Mrs Boyd:** I'm disappointed in the members of the government because I think they should understand that opposing starting Bill 82, given the mess their Attorney General has made of the family support plan, is not in their best interests. He taunted us on this side of the House about starting immediately on Bill 82, and you cannot claim we're not being cooperative because we are saying to you very clearly we want to debate Bill 82.

We want the people of Ontario to understand that not only in Bill 75 has this government ignored what they have heard from the people of Ontario, ignored the kind of amendments that have been brought forward by members of the opposition and the third party, you have absolutely ignored the ruination of what was deemed in the Ministry of the Attorney General's own plan as the best family support plan in Canada, indeed in North America. So you ought to be ashamed of yourselves for supporting your House leader and not going forward according to the wishes of his own minister who said he wanted us to debate Bill 82.

But since we are talking about Bill 75, I wish to continue in the vein in which I was dealing with this issue yesterday. This government said very clearly that the only reason it was bringing forward slot machines was to deal with the problem of illegal slot machines. The Minister of Finance is clearly, in his statement, only on that line: "This is the reason we are doing it." The Premier and the Minister of Finance have said time after time to the people of the province: "We don't have a revenue problem. The only reason we're doing this is to deal with the problem of illegal slots."

Yesterday, the minister who is responsible for the police, the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional



Services, and the Attorney General had the nerve, of course having called the press conference assuming they would get their way on closure on Bill 75 and it would already be law, to boast that they now, once they have the legal slot machines, are going to give them \$7 million to have an anti-gambling squad. If that isn't flim-flam-mery, I don't know what is. These two ministers, your so-called ministers of justice, are calling the administration of the law in this province into disrepute every day with that kind of trick.

When the police questioned, when you were going through the cabinet process — said very clearly that they needed the dollars to deal with anti-gambling, why weren't they given those dollars if that was the issue? Why didn't the \$7 million go into the police way back when all of that was being considered so they could deal with the issue of illegal slots? I know why, and the police ought to be ashamed to be part of an announcement like that. They did it because they wanted to use the excuse of those illegal slot machines to get through a bill that allows legal slot machines. The police were being used by the two ministers who claim that they are the ministers of justice in this province.

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** That's a shame.

**Mrs Boyd:** It is a shame. It is very shameful. The nonsense that we saw in this House today is another such example. Again and again and again we see these so-called ministers of justice dealing with issues that call the administration of justice into disrepute.

We have the Ipperwash crisis, a shameful thing. We see the Premier and the Deputy Premier and the Attorney General and the Solicitor General, all of whom are implicated by your own member for Lambton as having been given running reports about what was going on at Ipperwash, and they stand up and say: "We didn't have that information. We knew nothing, and there was no political interference." I can tell you that Mr Beaubien, the member for Lambton, represents not only the people who are opposed to the native people in Ipperwash but the people of Ipperwash themselves. It is his responsibility to represent their views as well.

That's why we're asking the Solicitor General, the Attorney General and the Premier's office to release the faxes that Mr Beaubien sent and show to us that in fact there was no political interference with the administration of justice in this province.

It isn't just Bill 75 where these two ministers play fast and loose with law and order in this province. It's not only there but it's in the case of a tragic shooting. Then we have the Solicitor General and the Attorney General covering up an incident that occurs at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, very clearly refusing to release a report to the public or to the young people and their counsel who were involved, but releasing it to those who are accused of wrongdoing in the case, releasing that report to the very people who are accused.

It's a similar kind of thing that we see with Bill 75, just playing fast and loose with their authority as ministers of justice in this province. The situation is getting very serious. When you see a government that purports to be a law-and-order government, that ran on a platform

that talked about respect for law and order, using the law to its own ends. That is what's happening in Bill 75.

**1710**

Instead of heeding the very clear advice of the police and saying, "Yes," instead of cutting back on the Ontario Provincial Police, instead of destroying the anti-racket squad, which is what that Solicitor General has done, what we should do is give the police the resources to deal with the illegal gambling. We should be very clear that allowing legal slot machines is no way to prevent the kind of illegal activity that has been the great worry of police officers in this province.

I say to the members opposite, you need to question very clearly how this will all look in hindsight to people. The very excuse that your government used for releasing this blight upon us in Ontario, the blight that causes addictions — and very clearly we had lots of evidence during the hearings that this is the case — the very excuse you use is false. You had at your disposal the means to fund the police to deal with illegal slot machines. I think it's very embarrassing for you to be caught in a position where this bill is not yet passed, and yet your two so-called ministers of justice are out there announcing what could have been announced long ago. People are going to start seeing through this kind of behaviour, seeing through the kind of bullying that you do.

It's very important that you understand this is a deeply felt issue for many people, that the 62% of people who were surveyed who said they didn't want these machines available in their communities are voters. It is going to be very difficult for some of you, particularly those of you who said as the Premier did that there would be no expansion of gambling in this province unless the individuals in the communities agreed to it. You need to know that your government refused to accept amendments to this bill which would have made it necessary for a municipality to agree to have video slot machines in its jurisdiction. Simple matter. It goes right back to the Premier's argument about the local level being the most important level — except, of course, in Metropolitan Toronto, where you seem to have changed your tune.

You also refused amendments that would have meant very clearly that these machines would not be put just anywhere in our communities. The Premier said, "We're not requiring that they be there, it's just permissive legislation." Permissive legislation is a very important issue, because it means anything goes once this bill becomes law.

Who's going to believe a Premier who says on the eve of the passage of this bill, which is very unpopular with those who are voters in this province, that these things will not be in bars and restaurants and amusement halls all over this province? His credibility is nil on this issue. He stood almost in my place again and again in this House and talked about how awful gambling was.

Quite frankly, I think given the fact that this government is not prepared to deal appropriately with the amendments to this bill, we must adjourn the debate, and I move that we adjourn the debate.

**The Speaker:** The member for London Centre has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please say "aye."



All those opposed, please say, "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1715 to 1745.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Will the members take their seats, please. The member for Hamilton Centre, could you take your seat, please. The member for St Catharines as well. The member for Welland-Thorold, will you please take your seat. Thank you.

The member for London Centre has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 15 and the nays are 51.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

**Mrs Boyd:** I'm really sorry that the members of the House don't understand the importance of the issue that we're raising this afternoon. Bill 75 is going to go down in history as an infamous error on the part of this government. It is going to be seen by the people of Ontario as a canker at the heart of our community, because it will allow video slot machines to be anywhere that the government deems it necessary to put them, and that is indeed a sad thing.

The committee that travelled around the province to deal with Bill 75 heard from many groups and from many of those involved in addiction counselling how very serious the addiction to video slot machines is. I know the government gets impatient when people in the opposition and the third party talk about this as the crack cocaine of gambling, but it is. The reality is that people just keep pulling that handle again and again, to the detriment of their families and to the detriment of themselves.

Opening the door to this widespread availability of VLTs within our neighbourhoods will succeed in causing addiction to gambling for a lot of people who would never have tried it. May I ask the members of the government benches, how many people do you know who go to Las Vegas and tell you, "Well, I didn't really gamble, I just played the slots"? Those are the people who, if the slot machine is in their neighbourhood bar or restaurant, will try it, and would never have gambled otherwise. If these machines are only in places where gambling is already allowed, like racetracks, like the off-track betting establishments, like the two casinos that are currently available, that is a place where people have gone intending to gamble. But when we see these things in the neighbourhood bar, looking — if people watched the film on television last night — very much like an arcade game, it will attract a lot of people who would never otherwise gamble.

That is the issue the opposition and the third party have been bringing forward. You are opening the door to a lot of problems that you tried to close your eyes to and you're doing it on a false premise. You're doing it based on the misinformation provided in the budget that this is necessary in order to control illegal gambling.

Your two so-called ministers of justice yesterday, in their press conference, and the police officers they gathered around them, showed very clearly that the

legalization of gambling has absolutely no positive effect on the illegality of these machines, and in fact may have a negative effect. The reason for that is, of course, that the payoff is bigger if it's an illegal machine. Once people become addicted, we know in other jurisdictions they drift to the illegal machines because the payoff is bigger.

The other issue, of course, is the issue of money laundering. I find it very interesting that no one in the government wants to consider the very serious and clear evidence that has been brought forward by the police around the money-laundering capabilities of legal slot machines. It is very difficult to track laundered money now; it will be that much more difficult when you have 20,000 legal slot machines out there. That has been the experience in other jurisdictions. You may want to pass this bill; we will continue to oppose it.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments.

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** In response to the member speaking — I need the clock — I don't agree.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I want to make a point that the former Attorney General has made, that there are a number of pieces of evidence that abound to support the contention that this qualitative advance in gaming is very threatening to the social and economic fabric of Ontario.

I was struck a few weeks ago to read — and I would recommend it for all members — a series of articles in the Minneapolis Star and Tribune called "Dead Broke." That quite prominent American newspaper took one of its top investigative journalists and gave that individual, Chris Ison by name, a very substantial amount of time and resource to go and look at what gaming, particularly this kind of gaming, was doing in that part of the United States. I'm telling you, you cannot read this kind of a report and conclude that we want to follow down that path in Ontario.

I accept the argument that's been made that we've been in this business for some time. It was a great debate here when Bob Welch, the sainted Robert Kemp Welch, a pillar in the Church of England, brought forward 20 years ago the Ontario Lottery Corp, that very innocent first step, at which time, by the way, assurances were given that we would never get much beyond that. I'm sure if Bob Welch were here today he would be very, very hard-pressed to accept this kind of advance into what has been called the worst of gaming, the crack cocaine, these absolutely compulsive pocket-picking electronic slot machines. This is a different and qualitatively more dangerous kind of gaming, and Ms Boyd is right to point that out.

**Mr Wildman:** I want to congratulate my friend from London Centre who has brought to this debate her perspective as a former Attorney General and her concern about the approach particularly in regard to the proposed additional moneys for dealing with the policing requirements resulting from the social problems that are brought on by the use of slot machines. She was quite right in pointing out that obviously the government expected Bill 75 would have been passed in this House because of the motion that was put forward for closure the day before



the Solicitor General had scheduled the press conference he had over at the coroner's building with the police officers to talk about what they were going to do in providing \$7 million additional funding to deal with the social problems related to illegal slot machines.

It's significant I think that when they were discussing that in the press conference the question was raised, "If there are all these social problems related to the use of illegal slot machines, are there not similar social problems related to the use of legal slot machines?" The police officer who was asked that question had to respond, "That's not the question I should be dealing with; that's essentially a political question." In fact, the point is this: If there are social problems related to addictions related to these kinds of machines, it doesn't matter one iota if it's legal or illegal; they still exist.

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** In response to the member for London Centre, I would remind all members of the importance of this legislation for the effective control of alcohol and gaming in Ontario.

**The Speaker:** Responses. I'm sorry. The member for —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** No, responses. The member for London Centre.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Pardon? The member for London Centre.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** What's your —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** There is no point of order. Everything's in order. The member for London Centre —

**Mr Kormos:** Let me explain what the rules say —

**The Speaker:** I know what the rules say. The member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** I'm not quite clear what was going on there.

I thank the members who commented on the speech that I made and who very clearly expressed their own point of view. It's very clear that this is a closed-minded government. Two members from the government stood up and gave no substantive answer, just said, "We disagree." And that's the way you're governing. You're governing this province with absolutely no attention to what is in the best public interest of the citizens of this province. You pay no attention to the advice that they bring you at committee. You pay no attention to the legitimate concerns that are raised. Why? Because you've got a determination to push a bill like this through because you're so desperate for the dollars that you need to fund your phoney tax cut. And that's what it's all about. In order to make a million bucks a day, in order to make up for the kind of dollars that you're passing out to your friends in terms of the phoney tax cut, you are prepared to not listen to the individuals in this province who have deep concerns about a deep social evil, a social evil that was outlined to you again and again. You would not even compromise to the extent of giving local governments the chance to say yes or no to these evil machines. That's not

even in your idea, that you could possibly listen to those who have to live with this evil. You know best. And that's the way you're governing.

**Mr Kormos:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order, please —

**Mrs Boyd:** And, Mr Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I have a point of order.

**The Speaker:** There's nothing out of order.

**Mrs Boyd:** No, I have a point of order, Mr Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**Mrs Boyd:** Excuse me. I still had the floor.

**The Speaker:** Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. There is nothing out of order. The member for Renfrew North?

**Mr Conway:** I have a point of privilege, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Then, member, make it quick.

**Mr Conway:** I will, Mr Speaker. On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Because we are about to adjourn, you promised earlier today to take under consideration a very serious matter. Since the meeting of the House this afternoon, I have had a very substantial piece of information brought to my attention that I think is absolutely important that you take under consideration over the next little while.

The Attorney General this afternoon did something that was very, very significant.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate what the member for Renfrew North is bringing to bear here. The fact remains simple: I heard the privileges and orders of the time. I said I would report back on those come Monday. Now, I understand what the game plan of the Speaker is, and my job is to maintain order. The privilege is not in order.

**Mr Conway:** We have a very serious matter. Two members are under criminal investigation —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Conway:** — and I have in my possession this afternoon information —

**The Speaker:** Member for Renfrew North, you're out of order. The member for Renfrew North.

**Mr Conway:** — that a member of the press gallery has been to the —

**The Speaker:** I am warning the member for Renfrew North.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I say to the member for Renfrew North, you're out of order.

**Mr Conway:** He went all through that building, and there were no —

**The Speaker:** One more time, I will name the member for Renfrew North as being out of order. I give you the last warning.

**Mr Conway:** — as well as from you, two members —

**The Speaker:** Last chance. The member for Renfrew North is out of order. I'm going to have to name you if you don't take your seat.

**Mr Conway:** We have two colleagues who are under criminal investigation —

**The Speaker:** I name the member for Renfrew North. I would ask that he leave the chamber.



**Mr Conway:** This is an intolerable situation. We cannot have members of this House under criminal investigation —

**The Speaker:** The member for Renfrew North, don't make the Sergeant touch you. The member for Renfrew North, I ask you to leave before force is needed. I ask you. I ask you to leave.

*Mr Conway was escorted from the chamber.*

**The Speaker:** The House needs to come to order. I hear you, the member for Brampton South. I can only have the House in order before I recognize you.

**Mr Wildman:** Mr Speaker, I have a point of order.

**The Speaker:** No, there is nothing out of order. There is nothing out of order.

**Mr Wildman:** I don't have a point of order. I have a point of privilege.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I ask the members to come to order. I hear you. I don't believe there's anything out of order. There is nothing out of order. The privileges: There's nothing that's been — there's no privilege here. It's in order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Algoma, I ask you to take your seat. Member for Oriole, I ask you to take your seat. The member from Cochrane, I ask you to take your seat.

**Mr Wildman:** Mr Speaker, with all due respect, you cannot ignore —

**The Speaker:** Order, order. I'm warning the member for Algoma, I'm going to name the member. I'm going to name the member.

It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned till Monday, November 18, at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1803.*



# CONTENTS

Thursday 7 November 1996

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

<b>Health Insurance Amendment Act, 1996, Bill 87, Mr Duncan</b>	
Mr Duncan	5093, 5101
Mr Cooke	5094
Mrs Johns	5096
Mr Phillips	5098
Mr Galt	5098
Mrs Pupatello	5099
Mr Bradley	5100
Negatived	5108
<b>Municipal elections, private member's notice of motion number 31, Mr Bob Wood</b>	
Mr Bob Wood	5101, 5107
Mr Gerretsen	5101
Mr Marchese	5102
Mr Clement	5103
Mr Michael Brown	5104
Ms Churley	5105
Mr Jim Brown	5106
Mr Christopherson	5107
Mr Shea	5107
Agreed to	5108

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Polish Independence Day</b>	
Mr Ruprecht	5109
<b>Royal Canadian Legion</b>	
Mr Martin	5109
<b>Child care</b>	
Mr Martin	5109
<b>Fire safety awards</b>	
Mr Arnott	5109
<b>Student program</b>	
Mr Lalonde	5109
<b>Government appointments</b>	
Ms Churley	5110
<b>Elaine Pomajba</b>	
Mr Carroll	5110
<b>Assistance to northern Ontario</b>	
Mr Gravelle	5110
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Ms Martel	5110
<b>TV Ontario</b>	
Mr Clement	5111

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Trucking safety</b>	
Mr Palladini	5113
Mr Colle	5114
Mrs Boyd	5115
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Mr Harnick	5114
Mr Hampton	5116

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Health care funding</b>	
Mr Duncan	5120
Mr David Johnson	5120
<b>Attorney General's comments</b>	
Mr Duncan	5121
Mr Harnick	5121, 5122, 5126
Mr Hampton	5121, 5126
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Mr Hampton	5122
Mr Harnick	5123, 5123, 5124, 5125
Mrs Boyd	5123
Ms Martel	5123, 5124
Mr Wildman	5124
<b>Parent-school association</b>	
Mrs McLeod	5123
Mr Leach	5124
<b>Municipal restructuring</b>	
Ms Bassett	5125
Mr Leach	5125
<b>Highway 416</b>	
Mr McGuinty	5125
Mr Palladini	5126
<b>Education reform</b>	
Mr Grimmett	5126
Mr Snobelen	5126
<b>Ipperwash Provincial Park</b>	
Mr Phillips	5127
Mr Runciman	5127, 5128
Mr Hampton	5127
<b>Waste Reduction Week</b>	
Mrs Ross	5128
Mr Sterling	5128

## MOTIONS

<b>Order of business</b>	
Mr David Johnson	5128
Agreed to	5129

## THIRD READINGS

<b>Alcohol, Gaming and Charity Funding Public Interest Act, 1996, Bill 75, Mr Tsubouchi</b>	
Mrs Boyd	5129, 5132
Mr Conway	5131
Mr Wildman	5131
Mr Flaherty	5132
Debate adjourned	5133

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Remembrance Day</b>	
Mr David Johnson	5111
Mr Doyle	5112
Mr Morin	5112
Mr Wildman	5113

## Attorney General's comments

Mr Kormos	5116, 5118
The Speaker	5116, 5117, 5119
Mr Wildman	5116
Mr Phillips	5117
Mr Cooke	5117
Mr Hampton	5118
Ms Lankin	5119
Mr O'Toole	5119
Mr Conway	5119
Mr Wildman	5119
Mrs McLeod	5120

## Visitor

The Speaker	5121
-------------	------

## Written questions

Mrs Caplan	5128
------------	------

## Adjournment motion

Mrs Boyd	5129
Negatived	5129

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeudi 7 novembre 1996

## AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT

<b>PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS</b>	
<b>Loi de 1996 modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-santé, projet de loi 87, M. Duncan</b>	
Rejetée	5108

## DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Stage pour étudiants</b>	
M. Lalonde	5109

## TROISIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 1996 régissant les alcools, les jeux et le financement des organismes de bienfaisance dans l'intérêt public, projet de loi 75, M. Tsubouchi</b>	
Débat ajourné	5133

## AUTRES TRAVAUX

<b>Jour du Souvenir</b>	
M. Morin	5111





No. 123

N° 123

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 18 November 1996

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 18 novembre 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service

3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2

Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats

3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2

Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430

Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 18 November 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 18 novembre 1996

*The House met at 1332.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M. Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa-Est) :** Le ministre des Affaires francophones se souvient-il qu'il y a 10 ans, cette Assemblée a adopté la Loi sur les services en français ? Se souvient-il de la joie et de l'espoir que ça a engendré chez les francophones de l'Ontario, comme tous ceux qui pensent que le progrès, c'est donner des droits et non d'en enlever ?

Dix ans se sont écoulés, et l'espoir a laissé la place à la crainte. La minorité francophone sait qu'elle n'a pas toutes les protections nécessaires et qu'elle est à la merci des révolutionnaires de Mike Harris. Mike Harris n'a pas encore touché directement la Loi 8, mais il a écrit à ses amis d'APEC qu'il avait l'intention de le faire.

Par contre, il n'a pas cessé de la bafouer. Il a éliminé complètement les services de santé de première ligne dans certaines régions. Il a détruit des outils de formation essentiels à la population franco-ontarienne. Il est en train d'étouffer des institutions d'enseignement qui viennent à peine de naître. La liste des dégâts est longue.

Pire encore, personne ne doute un seul instant que le gouvernement va continuer à s'acharner sur les droits acquis durement par les Franco-Ontariens. C'est en grande partie grâce à la combativité des Franco-Ontariens que la Loi 8 a vu le jour. J'espère voir se ranimer ce même esprit. J'ai confiance aussi que dans un avenir rapproché nous pourrions éliminer les obstacles à la reprise de la longue marche des Franco-Ontariens dans le plein épanouissement.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South) :** Last Tuesday in Timmins we had an opportunity to organize a community forum called Access on Housing. The purpose of that forum was simply to have people in Timmins and across the riding of Cochrane South come forward and bring their views on what the government is doing in regard to housing policies. We spoke primarily of a couple of issues, the first one being public housing.

The government has announced its intention as of last year that it would like to move on the privatization of public housing. I say to the government that through this forum the people who came forward — landlords, tenants, seniors and others — were almost unanimous on not

privatizing public housing. In fact, they saw that as a threat to seniors and a threat to other people on fixed incomes who would not be able to access apartments in the city of Timmins or other parts of the riding for reasonable dollars. So the people in the city of Timmins are saying, "No, don't privatize public housing."

The other issue we had a lot of discussion on was the question of rent control. Now, what's interesting here is that landlords and tenants alike said, "Why is the government doing away with rent control when rent control works?" They were saying they don't have a problem by and large as landlords, and as tenants they were saying they didn't have a problem. They were really scratching their heads wondering, "What is the government up to?" The government obviously is moving on an ideological bent, and the people of the city of Timmins were really left wondering why the government is moving forward on rent control.

I say to the government on behalf of the people of Cochrane South, deal with the real issues within the Landlord and Tenant Act and stay away from rent control, according to what they had to say at that hearing.

### SCARBOROUGH BICENTENNIAL AWARD OF MERIT

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre) :** It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today as the member for Scarborough Centre to announce an important award and ceremony that will take place in Scarborough this year.

In 1995, Scarborough council established the Civic Award of Merit to honour those who have brought honour to Scarborough, recognized beyond the confines of Scarborough, in any of the following categories: cultural achievement, business, politics, commerce and industry, community activity, the humanities, sports, media and labour.

As many of the members may know, 1996 is Scarborough's bicentennial, and as such, the city has chosen to suspend the normal civic award in favour of a Bicentennial Award of Merit. This special award will recognize 200 past and present Scarborough residents who have distinguished themselves both within and outside Scarborough's boundaries. Award recipients will be drawn from throughout Scarborough's 200-year history.

The names of the 200 recipients will be released shortly and a ceremony in their honour will take place in early December. I'm looking forward to the announcement and would ask every member of this House to give their congratulations to these great Scarborough residents.



## CHILDREN AND YOUTH

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South):** I take great pride in announcing to this House that today, November 18, 1996, the city of Ottawa becomes the first capital city in the world to declare itself Child and Youth Friendly.

Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa has been developed over the past months by concerned community leaders and students and is founded on the belief that children and youth who contribute to society at a young age will grow to be adults who have a sense of ownership, responsibility and pride in their community.

A number of new programs have been created to ensure we breathe life into our designation as a child and youth friendly city. One program will ensure that the young citizens of Ottawa have direct access to the head of our regional government. Another will give greater opportunity for youth to help meet some of our community needs by way of a youth volunteer corps.

In addition, we will call upon our young people to accredit our local institutions of government and business so that we have a performance rating from a child and youth perspective. This accreditation is based on the understanding that one of the best ways to learn if our community is meeting the needs of our young people is to ask them.

I am certain all members of this House will join me in commending the many people who had the vision to see that by fostering an atmosphere where the voices of our children are not only heard but solicited and where opportunities will be made available for young people to make a contribution to their community, we not only benefit our young, we benefit ourselves.

## EVENTS IN SAULT STE MARIE

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I had a most interesting and busy week last week back in the city of Sault Ste Marie. I spoke to literally hundreds of people. I knocked on over 300 doors at homes. I plant-gated at four different locations in the community. I attended on Saturday the 100th anniversary of the library system in Sault Ste Marie. On Saturday night I was at the annual banquet of the Elks Club in my community. I met with students at Algoma University, and teachers. All of them, to a person, raised concerns about what this government is doing to our community and to the people they represent and to themselves. They're very, very concerned.

Some of them, a very few of them, actually agreed with the program of this government, but all of them said it's too much and it's too fast. They were particularly concerned about the cuts to health care and the impact that's having on the ability of the hospitals in my community to deliver the quality of service we've all come to expect and are used to.

On Tuesday night, in fact, I participated in a mass demonstration in front of the hospitals prior to their board meeting, with literally hundreds of people — nurses, doctors, practical nurses, health care workers and patients and families of patients — who raised the same concern. They are very worried about what this government is doing to our community by way of the cuts to health care.

1340

## SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M. Ed Doyle (Wentworth-Est):** Permettez-moi, à l'occasion du 10<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Loi sur les services en français, de faire état des réalisations du gouvernement relatives à la prestation des services en français.

Tout d'abord, je tiens à rappeler que l'adoption de la Loi sur les services en français il y a 10 ans représentait en quelque sorte l'aboutissement naturel des mesures mises en place par les premiers ministres John Robarts, William Davis et Frank Miller. Je voudrais également rendre hommage à la communauté franco-ontarienne pour son dynamisme ainsi que sa détermination.

Par ailleurs, il me fait grand plaisir d'annoncer que le gouvernement a désigné cette année 48 nouvelles agences qui peuvent offrir des services en français. Cela démontre bien l'engagement de ce gouvernement envers le développement des services en français. C'est la première fois que le gouvernement de l'Ontario désigne autant d'agences dans une même année.

Je voudrais aussi signaler que nous avons maintenu, voire augmenté, la proportion des postes désignés bilingues dans la fonction publique depuis 1989. Cela démontre clairement notre volonté d'intégrer les services en français dans l'ensemble du nouveau gouvernement.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Recently I attended a town hall forum which was held for the sole purpose of discussing hospital restructuring in Sudbury. This meeting was attended by doctors, nurses, hospital administrators, municipal leaders, mothers, fathers, children, senior citizens, health care service providers and individuals representing the entire cross-section of our community.

These individuals shared one thing in common: They all agreed that the Health Services Restructuring Commission's recommendations for Sudbury are unacceptable. They will not accept the loss of Sudbury as the regional referral centre for northeastern Ontario. They will not accept the erosion of services to the point where there are too few acute care beds, too few chronic care beds and too few operating rooms. They reject the proposal that hundreds of jobs will be lost and thousands of individuals adversely affected by the destruction of our health care.

The community of Sudbury produced recommendations on how its hospitals ought to be restructured. The Health Services Restructuring Commission rejected these proposals with unbelievable arrogance. I assure you, Mr Wilson, Mr Harris and Dr Sinclair, it is with a cautious but unanimous voice that the citizens of my community reject your recommendations. We say no to your size; we say no to your reinvestment; we say no to your time line; we say no to you.

On behalf of the people at the forum we ask you to listen to the people of Sudbury, to listen to northeastern Ontario: Reverse the Health Services Restructuring Commission.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Tomorrow the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation is



making her first concrete announcement with respect to Ontario's new equal opportunity plan. We've been waiting for this. We've been waiting for over a year to find out the elements of this new equal opportunity plan for Ontario. What are we going to get? A spiffy new Web site and a brochure.

Let me tell you, Minister, that people are not impressed. People with disabilities, people facing discrimination in the workplace, people not able to get equal opportunity are not impressed with your Web site and your brochure.

There are members here of the Ontario Coalition of Persons with Disabilities who are part of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee. They've been trying to meet with you, Minister. You've refused to meet with them and the Premier has refused to meet with them despite all the promises you made that you wanted to work with them in developing the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and your new equal opportunity plan.

They're here today. They think your announcement tomorrow is a sham and they've got a whole series of questions they would like you to answer: For example, with one third of its term in office almost over, will the new Mushinski Web site force the Harris government to take meaningful action to keep its hitherto ignored and trivialized election promise to enact the Ontarians With Disabilities Act part of the Common Sense Revolution?

You say you're keeping your promises. You consistently break your promises to disabled persons. They're here today. Why don't you call them over into the east lobby? Why don't you meet with them, answer some of their questions directly? They know your announcement tomorrow won't answer any questions for people with disabilities.

### FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** This is a special time of year for Hindus in Ontario and throughout the world as they celebrate Diwali, the Festival of Lights. Diwali is a joyous time of renewal. Family, friends and neighbours come together to give thanks for an abundant harvest, for prosperity and, as ancient legend tells us, for the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness. Diwali is also a time of sharing, when Hindus invite their non-Hindu friends to share in the feasts, festivities and the ritual lighting of the lamps.

We are truly fortunate to live in a province where we can experience the traditions of many cultures. Our rich cultural heritage is one of the reasons that Ontario is such a great place to live, work and raise our families. As someone who has been privileged to take part in the celebration of Diwali, I would like to thank all Hindus in Ontario for sharing the wealth of culture, tradition and values they have brought to this province and extend warm wishes for a joyous celebration of Diwali.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) :** Monsieur le Président, point de privilège. Je demanderais le consentement unanime —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I couldn't hear you. Point of order?

**M. Bisson :** Point de privilège. Je demande le consentement unanime pour que chaque parti fasse une déclaration marquant le 10<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Loi 8.

**The Speaker:** Unanimous consent?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent regarding a statement with respect to Bill 8? No. No unanimous consent.

Ministers' statements? None?

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** I have some introductions to make, and I will take your point of order right after.

### OMBUDSMAN'S CASE REPORT

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I beg to inform the House I have today laid upon the table the Ombudsman's case report in the matter of the canteen allowance program and the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services, pursuant to subsection 24(1) of the Ombudsman Act. I will note that the Ombudsman, Ms Roberta Jamieson, is in the Speaker's gallery today.

I've got a point of order from the member for Nickel Belt.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. From time to time, some of us in this Legislature are troubled by some of the comments we hear from backbenchers. Just a minute ago, when my colleague from Cochrane South was making a point, the member for Brampton North uttered, "Speak English." I think it's time that members in this assembly learned that French is an official, acceptable language in this Legislature.

**The Speaker:** Member for Nickel Belt, I did not hear the comment made by the member for Brampton North, but I will certainly give the member for Brampton North an opportunity to withdraw it if in fact he said it.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South, come to order.

The member for Brampton North —

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** Can you ask him to withdraw?

**The Speaker:** I just did, to the member for Windsor-Riverside; I know you came in a bit late. I did, and apparently he didn't say it, he feels.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Mr Speaker, I just wondered if you had noted that the Golden Horseshoe Social Action Committee in Niagara against poverty were in the gallery today to observe the proceedings of the Legislature. I didn't know if you had noted that or not.

**The Speaker:** I have now. Thank you, to the member for St Catharines.

Point of order, the member for Cochrane South.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) :** Monsieur le Président, tous les députés de l'Assemblée, français ou anglais, ont la possibilité de faire des déclarations ici en Chambre dans deux langues. Je trouve ça pas mal difficile —

**The Speaker:** Order, the member for Cochrane South.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South, would you come to order, please. With all due respect, I under-



stand that, I appreciate that, and I think it's an accepted form, legislated in fact. The statement was allegedly attributed to the member. I asked the member to withdraw. Apparently, the member doesn't feel that he said that. Let's move on.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** You don't know that. You just didn't hear.

**The Speaker:** All I can tell you is that the member was given the opportunity to withdraw. I can't read his mind. Either he didn't believe he said it or he's not withdrawing. I don't know. The opportunity was given.

1350

#### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** On Thursday, November 7, 1996, several members rose on points of privilege with respect to the comments alleged to have been made by the Attorney General during responses to ministerial statements. The events unfolded as follows, and I'll recap them very quickly:

The member for Oakwood had the floor and there were a number of interjections. The member for Windsor-Riverside rose on a point of order saying that the Attorney General had made accusations about two members of this House. I indicated at the time that I had not heard the interjection and could not, therefore, compel the Attorney General to withdraw it. However, I did allow the Attorney General an opportunity to withdraw. The Attorney General did withdraw.

At issue was the use of language that could be considered unparliamentary, and it was dealt with in a manner that is consistent with the rules and traditions of this place.

Subsequent to these events, several members rose on points of privilege, suggesting that the comments made by the Attorney General could be prejudicial to a criminal investigation.

While this may be a question that will have to be answered by some other authority, it is not a question that can be decided by the Speaker. As I said at the time, on November 7, aside from asking the Attorney General to withdraw such comments if in fact they were made, there is nothing else the Speaker has the authority to do.

I reviewed the parliamentary authorities and find that the matters raised by the members on November 7 do not qualify as a case of privilege. That is the ruling.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I don't mean to debate at all, but I do have a question for clarification. I raised, on that very same point, a reference to Erskine May with regard to a long-standing privilege of members of Parliament — that is, the privilege of protection from arrest, the privilege of protection from litigation — about which the Speaker has not, as I understand it, ruled.

**The Speaker:** To the member for Algoma, I did in fact review your specific request on privilege. An argument on privilege should tend to convince the Speaker that a member is somehow stopped or restricted in his or her parliamentary duties. I gave careful consideration to the arguments of the member for Algoma to the effect that one of the privileges enjoyed by the members is freedom

from arrest. However, I want to point out, without going into the merits, that the privilege referred to in several parliamentary authorities is specifically referenced to a civil as opposed to a criminal context. It was in fact reviewed, and that was the ruling that we would stand with today.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### PHYSICIANS' FEES

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I have a question for the Premier. For the past week your government and the doctors of this province have been holding patients as hostages. Doctors are treating patients as pawns in their battle for higher fees. You are treating patients as pawns in your hacksaw approach to governing. Neither of you has put the interests of patients first. We've been asking you for months what you would do if doctors withdrew services, and for months you've been evading and avoiding the issue. It's now clear that you have no plan at all. My question is this, Premier: When will you accept responsibility for making sure Ontarians have access to doctors' services? When will you start putting patients first?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the Minister of Health can answer this.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** I thank the honourable member for the question and indicate to the member that the government has been doing everything over the last 16 months and particularly over the last few weeks to ensure that the interests of patients come first. I don't know what the honourable member's trying to refer to. The government has been putting the interests of patients first in all of our dealings. The negotiating parties are meeting, actually now, and are continuing to meet, between the government and the OMA, trying to solve problems that are long-standing in this province.

**Mr Cordiano:** I can't believe that incredible answer. Even your backbenchers have lost confidence in you as a minister. The member for Sarnia made some comments the other day. He says you're not even close to being a minister he would favour.

There's a crisis in this province and you're asleep at the switch. Parents with new babies are being turned away by doctors. The doctors say that the babies are new patients and that they're not taking any. Last Wednesday the North York after-hours clinic closed its doors indefinitely; no more emergency treatments. What do you say to patients who are being turned away from these places? Where do they go? Are you just going to continue with your policy of passing the buck?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** It's interesting. History will clearly show in this case that it's the federal Liberal Party that cut \$2.1 billion from health and social services in this province. This government has been working very hard with our partners, like the Ontario Medical Association and other groups, to try to bring reform to the health care system. I think in the next weeks and months we'll see some very good fruits of that labour.



"The public is saying, where is the problem here?" said Liberal MPP and finance critic Gerry Phillips. "The public, by and large, don't feel the doctors are dramatically underpaid." November 15's Ottawa Sun says "Grits, NDP, Tories Back Tories' Doc Fight." I'd say the only thing wrong with the article is that we're not fighting with the doctors; we're trying to work with their association and with individuals. But certainly the NDP and the Liberal spokespeople, at least when they're talking to the media, indicate they agree with the actions we're taking towards negotiations with physicians.

**Mr Cordiano:** When will the minister stop his empty rhetoric? Neurosurgeons, if you're not aware, have stopped taking on patients for elective surgery. Every day that goes by elective cases have a bigger chance of becoming real emergencies. Surgeons are no longer booking patients for gall bladder or hernia operations. Meanwhile you're sitting on your hands, and when you do that to Ontarians you're cheating them out of the medical services that are their right.

I ask you: How many more babies have to be turned away by doctors? How many more Ontarians have to have their surgery cancelled before you're willing to take real action, or is it the case that you're prepared to see some patients die before you take the necessary action?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** That's complete fearmongering and it's very, very irresponsible, particularly for someone who is running for leadership of one of the parties in this House.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** We have no evidence that Ontario's doctors are turning away babies, and I think the honourable member owes an apology to Ontario's doctors.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Cordiano:** Doctors consider new babies new patients and they're not taking them.

**The Speaker:** Can you tell me who your question's to, please?

**Mr Cordiano:** I can't believe the rhetoric, and a minister who just simply won't take action. Patients are suffering out there, Minister.

## EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** My question is for the Minister of Education and Training. You promised last election not to cut classroom education. You've already cut funding to schools by more than \$400 million. Your cuts are hurting kids. Class sizes are bigger. Libraries are closing and you continue to warehouse kids, even in your own riding, in portables; you've turned away from them. Given that your actions are robbing our children of the skills they need to compete in the future, will you assure students today that you will not cut an additional dime from their education in next week's economic statement?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I can assure the honourable member and everyone in Ontario that this government's commitment to the classroom and to the quality of education for students is unwavering. It has not wavered. We will keep our commitment to the people of Ontario and, more important,

we'll keep our commitments to the students of Ontario and there will be sufficient funds available to every student in Ontario for a high-quality education at the end of this government's mandate.

1400

**Mr Cordiano:** Your cuts are already hurting kids in the classroom and you plan to cut even more, hundreds of millions of dollars more. This time you've worked tirelessly to disguise your cuts as school board restructuring. That's a clever plan, but there's one problem. Let me read from last Friday's London Free Press: "Cutting the number of Ontario school boards likely would not save a lot of money, Education Minister John Snobelen said in London last Thursday." The reduction, he said, "probably wouldn't save significant amounts."

Minister, if cutting boards won't save significant amounts, there's only one other place hundreds of millions of dollars will be cut from and that will be the classroom. Why are you robbing children of their future by cutting hundreds of millions more from education?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I know the honourable member will be interested in this quote. He likes quotes, so I'll give him a quote. How about this? "A Joe Cordiano government will work to improve the quality of education and keep it affordable. More money should be spent on teaching and less on administration." Well, I concur with that quote from his own Web page.

**Mr Cordiano:** I'm glad the minister has taken the time to read things that I've said because he might learn a thing or two about what has to be done and what's a priority in this province.

Time and again, the minister has worked tirelessly to undermine education in this province. You know, you have a real problem because the Premier and the Treasurer are telling you they don't care where the savings come from, they just need the money. Now you have a big problem, that "They won't come out of the classroom so we'll get it from the school boards." The problem is that it's just not true and you've said so yourself. Your cuts will come from firing teachers, closing schools and closing down libraries. That's where it's going to come from. We all know it, you know it, the people out there are beginning to realize it.

When are you going to admit that the only saving you're going to achieve, if you really want to cut — and I don't agree with it and neither do the people out there, and you told them in the last election campaign you would not cut funding to schools in the classroom, you would not touch classrooms. Now we find out that the only way you're going to achieve the saving is to do that very thing. Minister, when will you —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Lawrence, thank you. Minister of Education.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I concur with the member's observation that it's important that we have a high-quality system of education in the province and that it be affordable. I have already said today in this chamber, I've said before in this chamber, that I can assure the people of Ontario that this government will provide an affordable system of education but one that is the highest quality in the world, and we will do that. I want to assure the honourable member opposite that that's the case.



But I want to say that my colleagues and I believe that the education system in Ontario, that the future of our students, is worthy of more than the kind of empty rhetoric we've heard once again in this chamber from the member opposite. I want to tell you we recognize the fact that we have a responsibility to prepare the young people for the future, but we also, sir, have a responsibility to prepare the future for our young people, and we take both of those obligations seriously.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Attorney General. While you are setting up the new family support plan office in Downsview and putting away the thousands of files that are strewn in the hallways, while new staff are being trained and they become familiar with family law, debt collection, reciprocal enforcement support and federal support laws, while all this is going on, new support orders are being issued and women and children around the province aren't getting their child support payments.

Your own business plan of January 18 said, "The transitional period will see a service reduction to clients for a period of time." What an understatement when 290 staff have been laid off, the regional offices have been closed, and thousands of women and children around this province aren't getting child support payments. You broke the family support plan. What are you going to do to fix it?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** The transition that is now occurring is on track. In the first two weeks of November, \$20 million was paid out to recipients. We are now answering approximately 50% of the calls that come in to the family support plan; that was never the case in the past. And we have successfully doubled the number of front-line staff who are now working in the family support plan. Forty-seven newly trained staff began last —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Fort York, order.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As I indicated, we have 47 newly trained staff who began last week and we now are answering calls at a rate of 50% versus the former plan's 6%. As I have indicated, we have disbursed \$20 million in the first two weeks of November. We are disbursing money faster than we have ever disbursed it before.

**Mr Hampton:** This Attorney General likes to castigate deadbeat dads. Well, what we've got here is a deadbeat minister and a deadbeat government. We've got a minister who lays off 290 staff, we've got a minister who says, "Oh, everything is fine," when women and children across this province are not getting their child support payments, when women and children are having their power disconnected, their natural gas shut off, their telephones disconnected and are being evicted from their apartments and having to go to the food bank to get food because of you, because you want to take money from women and children and give it to a phoney tax cut.

Your answer doesn't cut mustard any more. People across this country saw this so-called family support plan office that you've been telling us since August has been set up. It's not set up. The computers aren't hooked in,

the phone banks don't work, files are strewn in the hallway. We asked you a simple question: What are you going to do now to make sure that women and children get the child support orders they're legally entitled to and that you have been holding in a government bank account?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As I have indicated, we are now disbursing cheques at a much faster rate than they have ever been disbursed before. The member wants to know what we're now going to do. What we're now going to do is we will allow families who don't want the government to be administering their affairs the opportunity to opt out of the plan. We're going to do what the former government wouldn't do. After three years of the Provincial Auditor saying technology was not adequate, we're putting a \$1-million investment into upgrading the technology of the family support plan. What we're also going to do is enact tougher enforcement measures, driver's licence suspensions, credit bureau reporting and a number of other things, things that left the family support plan virtually in limbo when people were asked to try to collect and make collections of outstanding support orders.

**Mr Hampton:** We have presented these cases since the middle of the summer. The fact of the matter is that the family support plan problems we have been talking about here — people who got their money for three years or for five years and suddenly, in August and September and October and now in November of this year, aren't getting their money — those are your problems. Those are problems you created; no one else created them. All we are asking is this: What are you going to do now to fix those problems? The tens of thousands of mothers and children across this province who are being driven into poverty as a result of your decision: What are you going to do to fix that?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I have just outlined a number of the things that we are going to do to fix it. But I resent the implication and the accusation that this government is driving women and children into poverty. The fact of the matter is that there is presently \$1 billion owing to women and children. When the leader of the third party was the Attorney General and made some amendments to the family support plan, he made a commitment to get more money to women and to children. The fact of the matter is that he has not, by 2%, increased the number of people receiving money from the family support plan.

1410

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Where is the cheque? It's in the mail. Where is the money?

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Where is the cheque?

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** You didn't even have a plan when you —

**The Speaker:** The members for Lake Nipigon, Sudbury East and London Centre, it's very difficult to hear the Attorney General answer. I would appreciate if —

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** No one believes you any more.

**The Speaker:** The member for Windsor-Riverside as well. Thank you very much. Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I might tell you that, as a result of the way the old family support plan operated, we have



gone from \$300 million in debt in the last six years to the present amount of \$960 million in debt because this plan is totally ineffective and totally unable to put money in the hands of women and children.

**The Speaker:** New question, leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** I say to the Attorney General, after 40 years of Conservative governments saying to women and children, "Don't bother us that you can't get your child support payment," after 40 years of Conservative governments saying, "This is not a problem that government should be involved in," yes, I was very proud to be part of a family support plan that did start to collect hundreds of millions of dollars and put it in the hands of women and children. For your information, you can spin this however you want, but women and children across the province know that your real agenda is to put them back in the situation they were in under 40 years of previous Conservative governments where they're on their own.

#### ATTORNEY GENERAL'S COMMENTS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My second question is also to the Attorney General. Minister, on the last day that this House sat, you came into this House, you as Attorney General, you as the person who is supposed to administer the law of this province, you pointed across the way and you said, and Hansard quotes you, "I said there was a break-in."

Minister, what gives you the right to determine whether or not there was a break-in before a police investigation has even been started, before a judge has even decided —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Attorney General.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I have never in this House or anywhere else accused anyone of committing any offence. Hansard reports the comment —

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** How can you say that? Read the Hansard. It's a joke.

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Windsor-Riverside, that's unparliamentary.

**Mr Cooke:** What did I say? I said, "It's a joke."

**The Speaker:** Oh, I'm sorry. I misheard you then. I apologize.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** He said, "It's a joke."

**The Speaker:** I thank the member for Cochrane South. I greatly appreciate that. Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Hansard speaks for itself. I'd also like to say, to the extent that my remarks may have been misinterpreted, I clarified them.

**Mr Hampton:** This is what the Attorney General said and this is what was recorded in Hansard. He said, "I said there was a break-in." Then he goes on later in Hansard to say, "We all know who was involved." This is supposed to be the person who is absolutely neutral. This is supposed to be the person in the legal system of the province who casts no aspersions, who prejudices no one and who prejudices no incident.

Minister, how can you continue to be the Attorney General of the province when you come into this Legislature, a public forum, and you say, "I said there was a

break-in" and "We all know who was involved," and we all know the aspersions you cast? How can you continue to be the Attorney General of the province when you conduct yourself in that way?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As I have indicated, I have never in this Legislature or anywhere else said anything with respect to the guilt or innocence of any person. I do not intend to comment any further on this matter.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** There is presently a police investigation going on, and it would be inappropriate to comment further.

**Mr Hampton:** I wonder what changed between now and when the House last sat, because the Attorney General came into this House and announced a police investigation. Frankly, even that is not the constitutional role of the Attorney General; if there is to be a police investigation, that is the constitutional role of the Solicitor General. If there is to be a police investigation into something which may in fact involve the Attorney General, it is certainly not the place of the Attorney General to go around announcing a police investigation.

You were quite full of aspersions in this House a week ago. Not only did you come in and announce a police investigation, not only did you accuse people of breaking in, and not only did you look across the floor and say, "We all know who did it" — can you tell us what has changed between now and then? If it is not proper for you now, if saying something now would result in your resignation, why haven't you resigned already?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** What I did a week ago or 10 days ago was to announce that there had been an incident on Ministry of the Attorney General premises, and my statement spoke for itself. As a result of that incident, the assistant Deputy Attorney General called the police.

#### SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Orillia):** In the absence of the minister responsible for women's issues, I direct my question to the Premier. November is Wife Assault Prevention Month. Today the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses released this scathing report outlining the impact of your government's cuts on abused women and their children. The report, titled *Locked in, Left Out*, tells us that women are staying in or returning to violent relationships because of your government's cuts to supports and services they need to help them.

Premier, do you think women are making the right decision by staying in abusive relationships so they can continue to feed their children? Or do you think they should leave the relationship, knowing that each and every day they will be looking into the faces of their hungry children? What advice do you give women in violent and abusive relationships?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I know that the Minister of Community and Social Services is involved very heavily in this issue and would be pleased to respond.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Thank you, to the member, for the question.



We take the issue of violence against women quite seriously, and that is one reason we have the supports and the funding and the programs in place so that those women are not put in that position, to have to make that choice.

**Mrs Caplan:** The minister responsible for women's issues is unable today to stand in her place and defend the actions of this government and the Premier refuses to, and the answer from the Minister of Community and Social Services is an insult to the women in this province who are forced to stay in abusive relationships or face the faces of their hungry children.

Minister, since your government took office, 29 women, almost 30 women, have been murdered by their abusive partners. That's just since your government took office. You have the gall to stand there and give an answer which is an insult. But more than that, you have cut social assistance rates for single moms and their children; you have cut transfer dollars to emergency women's shelters; you've eliminated provincial funding for programs in second-stage housing; you have further cut funding to crisis lines, community counselling, child protection, and the list goes on. I say to you, Minister, what —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Oriole, the question is put. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I appreciate the honourable member's concern because this is indeed a very, very serious issue. We have protected some funding; we have put forward funding for women who use and need the supports so they don't have to stay in abusive relationships. In my ministry alone we have \$60 million that is helping to support 97 emergency shelters and over 100 counselling agencies because we do recognize that women need this support. That's why we are working so hard to make sure it is there for them.

1420

**The Speaker:** New question, third party.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I have a question to the Minister of Community and Social Services. This morning we heard from the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses how her government's cuts are hurting women and kids. Minister, vulnerable women and their children rely upon you and your ministry in very difficult times in their lives. In view of what we learned about the family support plan last week, can you assure us there is adequate security within the Ministry of Community and Social Services so that the very personal and confidential records of women who have been recipients of FBA or GWA benefits can't be inappropriately obtained?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Yes, it is the practice of the Ministry of Community and Social Services to protect the confidentiality of information that comes to us or that is involved in our management of people who may well be on our social assistance system. I'm very pleased the honourable member across the way has seen fit to ask this question so that we can perhaps get some details from him about the accusation he is about to make, because we weren't able to get it before. I would be more than pleased to respond to his comment.

**Mr Kormos:** I'm about to address an issue which has significance and importance to this House and I certainly hope to the minister. A constituent of mine, Ms Margo

MacFarlane, is involved in matrimonial litigation. Specifically, she's seeking support payments for her children in the Ontario Court (General Division) at Welland. She came to my office with an affidavit that had been served upon her, sworn by her estranged spouse as the respondent in this matter, which affidavit had attached to it as exhibit G a complete printout of her history with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, indicating amounts paid and whether it was under GWA or FBA. Most significantly, it also contained her address and her unlisted telephone number.

Ms MacFarlane swore a statutory declaration in Welland indicating that she never authorized Comsoc to release this, that she never authorized anybody to receive it, that she never requested it herself. She's particularly disturbed not only because of this serious breach of privacy, but because it contains her unlisted telephone number and because of the history of harassment. She has been put at risk. She has been violated in the most significant way. Will the minister please assure us that this appalling breach of security is going to be investigated promptly and publicly so that we can be assured it will not recur?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The Ministry of Community and Social Services does not release such documentation. I would be pleased to look into any circumstances where the member thinks this has occurred, but I would also like to remind the honourable member that in court cases, when documents are subpoenaed, frequently those documents must be released. I repeat that the policy of our ministry is not to release such confidential information.

#### VULNERABLE ADULTS

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** My question is directed to the minister responsible for seniors. I have a question that is of great concern to the seniors of the Peterborough area regarding elder abuse. I have with me a copy of a very shocking article from yesterday's Toronto Star which describes the horrible abuse many seniors face, from financial manipulation to neglect and even abandonment. Many seniors are seeing their rights ignored. Can the minister tell us what is being done to combat this very serious problem?

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** I'd like to thank the member opposite for his question. I know that most members of this House may have seen the article, but all members of this House are deeply concerned about this serious issue affecting our communities.

Our government is very committed to dealing with the issue of protecting vulnerable adults and that's why much progress has been undertaken in the last few years. I'm pleased that my colleague the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation launched an initiative for vulnerable adults as part of a commitment to invest \$3 million into a program to assist vulnerable adults. This is a program which is available for information through every member of the Legislature's constituency office, and I encourage groups to make application for it.

As the minister, I've also been meeting with advocacy groups and seniors, such as Senior Link, and even this



morning I had an opportunity to meet with the councils on aging network of Ontario, where they have encouraged the government to continue to develop and deliver these programs to address this shocking tragedy in our province.

**Mr Stewart:** As we're all aware of the financial situation our government is working under these days, I would like to ask the minister to describe the financial and funding arrangements for groups working to assist vulnerable seniors.

**Hon Mr Jackson:** First of all, I'd like to acknowledge that much of the work that's going on is occurring at the grass-roots community level. Since 1991 we've had the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, and it's now operating in 43 communities and growing. It's important that they are working cooperatively with this government in terms of developing these programs. We've seen positive responses from police services in terms of strengthening protocols so we can catch elder abuse. In the article from the Toronto Star, Lynda Hurst very well described the problem of trying to get at this. This is why my colleague the Attorney General announced in this House two weeks ago further protections for vulnerable people, including the existence of two new courts to deal with domestic violence, and this will include a large cohort of elders who are abused.

We are very encouraged by the investment of money through the Trillium Foundation to encourage community partners to participate. But make no mistake: This government realizes the importance of this issue and is prepared to continue to promote programs to help.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** My question is to the Minister of Health. As you know, last week the board of directors of the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital, while accepting most of the directives of the Health Services Restructuring Commission, courageously decided that it could not accept the decision to refurbish the Port Arthur General site as the sole acute care facility in our community and instead has asked for further negotiations with you related to a new facility located in a central location. As I'm sure you realize, this was not a decision reached easily and it certainly was not done without recognizing the potential implications of such a decision. But I want to assure you that it was done with the support and the best interests of our community in mind.

Minister, under Bill 26 you have given yourself the authority to disband the regional board, if you so choose, and appoint a supervisor to carry out your demands. My question is this: Recognizing that the community is simply asking for some choice as to the long-term health care needs for the region, will you today guarantee that you will not bring the hammer down on our community and that you will meet with the board of the regional hospital and work with them and all those in our community —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. The Minister of Health.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** I appreciate the honourable member's question. May I begin by thanking the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital board for taking a very responsible position and concentrating, not on many

other things that have happened in the past, but on the actual future services to the people of Thunder Bay. I commend, on behalf of all members in this House, the very courageous decision they've taken in supporting the decisions made by the Health Services Restructuring Commission, with the exception, as the honourable member points out, that they would like a new hospital rather than a refurbished hospital.

On Friday I received the proposal that the community has put forward for a new hospital and I'm looking at that. But I'm inclined at this point to say to the honourable member that we're still doing the costing out. We have to keep in mind —

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** — what's best for services, concentrate less on the bricks and mortar, and of course we have to do what we can afford, and that includes what the local taxpayers in Thunder Bay can afford.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** Minister, I agree with you that the position the regional hospital board in Thunder Bay has taken is one which is very responsible. They've also made it very clear, and it's taken a great deal of courage to stand up and say so, that the decisions that have been made by the hospital restructuring commission and which they chose to impose on Thunder Bay are simply wrong for our community.

1430

I think it's important that you know it's not just the regional hospital board that is saying no. There is a coalition group of business people, labour and concerned citizens who have made it clear that they support the regional board's decision 100%. The chamber of commerce has made it loud and clear that they believe that the specific recommendations of the commission are wrong for our community. And, as you speak about the interest of the taxpayers in Thunder Bay, a huge majority of our citizens has made it absolutely clear that they will not raise the dollars to support a decision which they believe is absolutely wrong for health care in our community.

Minister, it is now your responsibility. There was a quotation attributed to a member of your staff that said any meeting with the Thunder Bay regional board would be simply a courtesy. I ask you to assure us that that is not the case, that you are prepared to listen to the residents of Thunder Bay and that you will make the right decisions for health care in our community.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I again make it clear for the record that the regional board supported the restructuring commission's directives, all their directives, it's my understanding, but one, and that's about the new hospital. So let's give credit where credit is due, as the honourable member has done, but make it clear that very key decisions have been supported by the local community. On behalf of all members, I commend your community for that.

Again, we have to take into account what the taxpayers can afford. My preliminary review of what we received last Friday from Thunder Bay is that there could be upwards of a \$100-million difference between what the commission has asked the government to put forward and what the community would want in terms of a new hospital. One hundred million dollars is a tremendous



amount of money and I'm not sure the local community could raise that kind of money to make the new hospital possible. I'm looking at all these matters, but we do have to take the taxpayers' pocketbooks into account, certainly.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'd like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today the legislative interns from Ottawa, representing the government of Canada. Welcome.

### ATTORNEY GENERAL'S COMMENTS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Attorney General once again, and it concerns what he said in this House last week. On page 5121 of Hansard, the Attorney General said, not once but twice, "I said, in response to an interjection, there was a break-in...." "I said there was a break-in."

Can the Attorney General tell us what legal authority gives him the capacity to conclude, before the police or a judge have even considered the matter, that there was a break-in? Can you tell us what legal authority gives you the capacity to make that conclusion?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Never have I said anything in this House or elsewhere with respect to the guilt or innocence of any person. I referred to an incident that occurred. I think the proper thing was done. The police were called to investigate and that investigation is now ongoing.

**Mr Hampton:** The Attorney General didn't answer the question, and I know why he didn't answer the question: because he doesn't have the legal authority. His comment was completely inappropriate. It is something totally outside the capacity of the Attorney General and something he should resign for.

I want to ask the Attorney General this. On page 5115 you say, in reference to this break-in that you're talking about, "Ask Kormos what he did [to] the security guard." And then you say, "— break into offices."

Can you tell us what gives you the legal authority as Attorney General of this province to accuse someone, say, "Ask what Kormos did to the security guard," and then to say, "break into offices"? What legal authority gives you the capacity to cast those aspersions when neither the police nor a judge has even considered or adjudicated the matter? What gives you the legal authority?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As I've indicated, an incident occurred at the family responsibility office.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** A break-in, you called it.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As a result of that, however the interjection wants to characterize it —

**Mr Hampton:** You characterized it. You called it a break-in.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Mr Wildman:** You called it a break-in. Resign your God-damned seat.

**The Speaker:** Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Algoma, I would ask that you withdraw.

**Mr Wildman:** I withdraw the comment, the characterization of the word "seat." I do not withdraw the demand that he resign.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** That guy said break and enter.

**The Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Pouliot:** I've had it with this type of innuendo, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I understand.

**Mr Pouliot:** I'm an honest person. I've had enough.

**The Speaker:** Some days some of us have had it. I appreciate that. We still have to keep —

**Mr Pouliot:** Some days somebody has to carry the guilt.

**The Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon, we still must have order.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As a result of that incident, I think the responsible thing was done and the police were contacted by the officials of the ministry and they are now investigating.

**Mr Hampton:** On a point of order, Speaker: I believe by the Attorney General's answer he just indicated that some of the things I said were untrue. I want you to merely know I am quoting from Hansard.

**The Speaker:** Order. Leader of the third party, I didn't hear him use those words. That would be the only thing that's out of order. You may take exception to how he answered the question, but that's not a point of order.

**Mr Hampton:** Mr Speaker, I am quoting from Hansard and for the Attorney General to infer, to say that someone else is inferring that he made these statements is to say that we are somehow inferring an untruth. It's part of the legislative record. The Attorney General said these things.

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Hampton:** He accuses someone.

**The Speaker:** Leader of the third party, would you come to order, please. Thank you. New question.

### ROAD SAFETY

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** My question is for the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services. Many of my constituents in Mississauga South have asked me if it's possible to increase the police presence on our provincial highways. Mississauga residents regularly —

*Interjections.*

**Mrs Marland:** Do I have to put up with this?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Mississauga South, that's not really considered disorder or grave disorder. I'm doing my best to maintain order. I ask you to put your question.

**Mrs Marland:** I can't even hear myself speak, and that's saying something.

My residents are concerned about accidents and the risk of driving. Many of my residents regularly drive on the QEW, Highway 403 and Highway 401.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Leader of the third party, order.

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs Marland:** I may not be Speaker yet, but I know how to behave in this place.

Solicitor General, our safety is threatened by the dangerous drivers we frequently encounter on these highways and I would like to know from you if there are any initiatives to put more OPP officers on patrol on our provincial highways.

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I want to thank the member for her interest in the progress of our expanded traffic enforcement efforts. I know how committed the member for Mississauga South is to enhancing road safety. I was very impressed when OPP Superintendent Bill Currie told me about his All Hands on Deck initiative. In fact, I had the opportunity to see OPP officers in action out on the front line when this initiative was announced.

The OPP superintendent has provided me with the results of the first month of operation on the 400-series highways in the greater Toronto region: Total on-road patrol hours for the OPP have gone from 15,319 to 21,325, an increase of 39% in one month.

1440

**Mrs Marland:** I'm really pleased to hear about that increase in time. Obviously constituents all over the province will feel the security of knowing that a 39% increase in on-road patrol hours is indeed impressive progress.

Minister, may I also ask you if you can tell us what the results of this increased patrol time mean in terms of preventing collisions and getting those dangerous drivers off the road once and for all?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I'm pleased to report that total motor vehicle collisions have decreased by 9%, total traffic charges are up 6% and seatbelt charges are up 36%.

Since the inception of the road safety plan last year, I have been very impressed by the initiative and imagination shown by OPP commanders across the province. For example, there are now Highway Ranger enforcement teams in the greater Toronto area, the western region based in London and the central region based in Orillia. Soon I hope to be able to announce further progress in our continuing efforts to improve road safety in this province.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Premier. There are a number of people in the gallery today who are here to protest your continuous betrayal of the promises you made to Ontarians with disabilities in the last election campaign. Since you have come to power, you have imposed user fees on drugs for Ontarians with disabilities, you have cut programs, you have slashed funding, and you have taken away many of the programs and initiatives that in the past have helped Ontarians with disabilities access the workforce, access public transportation, access a barrier-free workplace.

Tomorrow your minister is going to unveil the long-awaited equal opportunity plan. This was supposed to replace the programs that were scrapped as a result of your employment equity for the disabled programs that this government eliminated when it came to power. This plan that the minister is going to introduce tomorrow is

basically a Web site and a brochure. Can you tell Ontarians with disabilities who have barriers right now in the workplace and in transportation how a Web site and a brochure are going to help them break those barriers?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I don't think the minister is here today, but the minister will be here tomorrow. My sense is that not only you but every member of this House, and members of the public and the community at large, will once again see that we've honoured our commitment to all the people of Ontario.

**Mr Agostino:** That is not an answer from the Premier. There are a number of people here today and they're here because the minister sent them a letter telling them what he's going to announce tomorrow: It is a Web site. Over 50% of disabled Ontarians who are able to work are unemployed in this province. There are barriers to transportation, there are barriers to employment opportunities and workplace barriers. Those are real barriers that disabled Ontarians face every day in this province.

You took away the employment equity program that was in place to help individuals with disabilities when you came to power. You promised you were going to replace that with some real initiatives, some real training. What you are announcing tomorrow is a Web site. It should be called [www.betrayal](http://www.betrayal). You have simply gone ahead, used disabled people in your election promises, used disabled Ontarians when you felt it was appropriate, and now that you're in power and have the opportunity to help, you are simply coming forward with nothing but a smoke-and-mirrors public relations exercise.

Again I ask you: How do you tell the 50% of Ontarians who are disabled and out of work that this Web site and this brochure that you're going to introduce tomorrow are going to help them access the workplace and the workforce?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I explained to them that there is a whole host of initiatives that this government is taking. The Web site is one of them, but perhaps the most important is, through a series of meetings with a number of our ministers, the changes we've been making to employment supports. We are the first government certainly in recent history that has acknowledged and accepted the challenge of taking disabled people off the welfare rolls, off the inappropriate programs — something your government wouldn't do, something the New Democratic Party wouldn't do.

Through a series of consultations with a number of groups involved we have been moving forward. First of all, when we made changes to the support programs for those on welfare and the rate adjustments, they were exempted from those changes. We are bringing forward a new program that treats them with dignity, that treats them with respect, that brings employment support, coordinated over a whole number of ministries, including that of the minister who will make an announcement tomorrow.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, Laura Nagy is an FSP recipient. She received her cheques regularly,



without problem, until August. She received a partial payment in September, nothing in October, nothing in November. For two months now, she's been trying to find out what the problem was. She called the family support plan on numerous occasions; she called her MPP on numerous occasions. Week after week she got no response from the family support plan or her MPP.

Finally, last Thursday, she spoke to a worker at 55 Yonge Street, where you say all the work is being done. She found out that a stop payment was put on her account because her husband said he was going to court to get custody of the children. No one called her to check out the situation, and in fact for two and a half months no one could tell her what the problem was, why she wasn't getting paid. She has custody of her children; she has had all along; she still does. Minister, why is she not getting her money from your ministry?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I'm not in a position to answer that particular case. What I can tell you is what I said before. In the first two weeks of November, \$20 million was paid by the family support plan. We are now processing 25% more cheques a day than we have in the past. We are moving the family support plan to more of an electronic banking system, as opposed to having cheques sorted by hand, which took an inordinately long period of time. We have trained a new workforce, we have more people working on the front lines right now and we are able to answer calls from people at a rate that has never existed at the family support plan before.

**Ms Lankin:** Minister, I'm surprised that you don't know this case and you can't answer this case, because you're the MPP. She's called your office on numerous occasions and you refuse to respond to her.

When Laura Nagy asked why the order was put on the file, based on what information, the worker there couldn't answer, so she called me. I'm not going to tell you what I went through to try to get to a live body to get an answer, but finally today I spoke to a worker at Bay Street who was very helpful. She gave me the same information that Laura got, plus one crucial fact: The reason the Yonge Street worker and the Bay Street worker couldn't say what information the decision was based on is because that information is in her file and her file is at Downsview in those boxes, in those hallways, in that transition office where no one's working, not where the workers are, where you say the work is being done.

Minister, this crisis — and it is a crisis — is entirely of your making. Your improprieties and your incompetence have just gone too far for all of these women. Why won't you just pack it in? Why won't you just resign, get someone in there who cares about women and children and who will fix this plan so that they get —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** What I'm trying to do is to take a plan that was failing and that was neglected and that had a debt that had accumulated from \$300 million to close to \$1 billion and to start to collect that money. Yes, we are going through a transition, we are creating a new plan, but the old plan was a totally ineffective plan. The old plan ran up, in a matter of a few years, debt from \$300 million

to almost \$1 billion. I can tell you that when 50,000 people a day were phoning the family support plan, they were not phoning to tell us what a good job we were doing. That's why we're changing the plan.

## LIQUOR CONTROL

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** Recently I was contacted by one of my constituents in Scarborough Centre —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Could you tell me whom your question is to.

**Mr Newman:** The Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

Recently I was contacted by one of my constituents in Scarborough Centre with concerns about the Liquor Licence Act and the misuse of special occasion permits. My question, on behalf of that constituent, is to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

It is my understanding that the minister has tightened regulations under the Liquor Licence Act and that there have been incidents of establishments selling alcoholic beverages under the caterers' endorsement of another licensee's liquor sales licence and attempts to misuse special occasion permits. Will the minister kindly inform the House as to how these changes will help to eliminate the problem?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I thank the member for Scarborough Centre for the question. The member is correct: We have tightened regulations under the Liquor Licence Act to prevent establishments from selling alcoholic beverages without a licence or when the licence has been revoked or suspended or refused. Some establishments have been trying to use special occasion permits to sell liquor from establishments that have been refused or suspended or revoked.

1450

These changes will give the police and the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario the additional tools to get tough with people who try to circumvent the liquor laws of the province. It also helps them to respond better to community complaints. We have confirmed our commitment to continue the provincial government's role of setting standards of policies to ensure these are enforced. These changes will prevent occasions, where licences have been revoked and suspended and refused, of trying to circumvent this particular situation and somehow getting special occasion licences when they should not.

**Mr Newman:** Will the minister please tell the members for what reason a licence can be denied, when it is appropriate for special occasion permits to be issued and what they are meant for?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** A liquor licence can be denied in the public interest and a licence can be revoked if the regulations are contravened. Special occasion permits are for occasions such as receptions or community festivals, weddings and the like and certainly not for business purposes. We are helping to enforce community safety by responding to communities that are concerned that people are circumventing the law. These new regulations will certainly lead to safer communities.



## VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My question is to the Premier. This afternoon your government will try to ram through a bill that will allow the most alluring, the most seductive, the most addictive kind of gambling to come to every bar and every restaurant and every neighbourhood in Ontario, as video lottery terminals are electronic slot machines that are designed to attract young people, the most desperate, the most vulnerable and the most addicted.

Premier, you have stated to members of the press, and your spin doctors have tried to get the message out, that somehow you really don't believe these are going to go into bars and restaurants. If it is true, what you are trying to sell to your backbenchers and others, that you do not intend to place these in every bar, restaurant and neighbourhood in Ontario, will you accept an amendment to your legislation this afternoon which would prohibit the placement of video lottery terminals, electronic slot machines, in every bar, restaurant and neighbourhood in Ontario?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the minister responsible for the bill would be pleased to answer.

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** We certainly have given a commitment to watch this very carefully and implement the policy in a carefully controlled and monitored manner. We have made a commitment to look at video lottery terminals at racetracks and certainly in charity gaming halls. We have also given a commitment to make sure we observe and respect the concerns of the community out there. We have heard through the committee hearings the concerns of the community. We also have heard support for this initiative from the hospitality area, certainly from racetracks and from many charities that will benefit from this initiative.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) :** Monsieur le Président, je me lève sur un point d'ordre faisant affaire avec le Règlement de l'Assemblée législative 22(a) :

«Tout député qui désire obtenir la parole se lève de sa place et s'adresse au président de l'Assemblée législative, en anglais ou en français, en le désignant par son titre.»

Quand je me levais aujourd'hui pour demander un consentement unanime pour être capable de faire une déclaration sur la Loi 8, le membre de Brampton-Nord a crié après moi —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I appreciate the fact that you're standing on a point of order.

**M. Bisson :** Merci. C'est que le membre de Brampton-Nord, aujourd'hui quand j'ai fait ma déclaration, a crié à travers la Chambre, «Parle en anglais.» Premièrement j'ai le droit, comme député et représentant de ma circonscription —

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Cochrane South, that has been dealt with. That point of order was dealt with. I have great appreciation that maybe you don't feel it was dealt with, but the fact is, I do. I dealt with the point of order. We dealt with the member for Brampton North. It's been dealt with. There is no point of order, in my opinion.

I will say, very quickly, if you have a different point of order than what was dealt with, I will give you a brief

moment to explain it. Other than that, I'm going to move on.

**M. Bisson :** Monsieur le Président, le point d'ordre, je vais peut-être le faire comme point de privilège, est pour dire que ce n'est pas la première fois à l'Assemblée qu'un membre du gouvernement a crié à travers la Chambre pour me demander de m'exprimer en anglais quand j'ai essayé de le faire en français. Je vous donne —

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Cochrane South, there's nothing out of order.

**M. Bisson :** Monsieur le Président, écoutez donc —

**The Speaker:** There is nothing out of order. The only thing that's becoming out of order is your interjection. It was dealt with. I appreciate the fact that you don't feel it was dealt with properly, but the fact of the matter was, it was dealt with. I must move on. Motions? No motions. Petitions. The member for Sudbury.

**M. Bisson :** Monsieur le Président, sur un point de privilège, s'il vous plaît.

**The Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South.

**M. Bisson :** Donnez-moi 10 secondes pour vous expliquer le point que j'essaie de faire. Ce n'est pas la première fois que je me suis fait chanter des bêtises dans cette Assemblée. Je vous demande, comme Président de l'Assemblée, de respecter l'ordre et les droits de la minorité de cette Assemblée. Je trouve que ça ne se fait pas, et ce n'est pas la première fois que ce député m'envoie ces bêtises-là. Je vous demande de faire votre job, Monsieur le Président, et de respecter les droits des francophones de cette Assemblée.

**The Speaker:** To the member for Cochrane South, if anyone has said anything that you find particularly offensive or you find to be out of order, if you bring that to the attention of the Speaker — I have done so and dealt with them I think rather rapidly in the past.

I did not hear the member for Brampton North say that. It was alleged he said that. I went to the member for Brampton North. He chose not to become involved. If you're suggesting to me that I'm not doing my job by protecting the rights of minorities, I don't think you're being fair. I did what the Speaker is allowed to do and asked the member to address it. Beyond that, there's no point of order, and I think frankly it is unfair of you to suggest that I can do anything more than I've done.

## PETITIONS

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I have another 500 signatures on a petition that I've presented to the House before.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has recommended the closure of two acute care hospitals in Sudbury; and

“Whereas the overall number of available beds will be reduced by approximately 35%; and

“Whereas the reduction in beds will affect Sudbury's ability to remain the referral centre for health care in northeastern Ontario; and



"Whereas there will be a large number of layoffs in the health profession, impacting the quality of local health care and our Sudbury economy; and

"Whereas the global annual budget for Sudbury health care will be reduced by approximately 25%;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to rescind the Health Services Restructuring Commission's recommendation to close two acute care Sudbury hospitals."

I agree with the 15,304 people who have signed and I continue to encourage the people to send their postcards to the Minister of Health.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly which reads as follows:

"Whereas Mike Harris and Charles Harnick promised to improve the family support program; and

"Whereas Mike Harris promised in the Common Sense Revolution that 'government should concentrate its efforts on tracking down deadbeat parents and enforcing payment orders'; and

"Whereas the closure of the family support plan's regional offices have caused a decrease of quality service and lengthened delays; and

"Whereas cuts to the family support plan have eliminated community-based services, replaced enforcement staff with technology and limited communication; and

"Whereas Mike Harris has clearly broken his promise to provide for better enforcement of support orders;

"We, the undersigned, demand that Mike Harris reopen the regional offices and guarantee adequate staffing numbers to provide quality services to recipients and children. We also request a formal apology from Mike Harris and Charles Harnick for the manner in which the current system has handled our cases."

This is signed by 44 recipients of the family support plan, all of whom are having trouble getting money from this government. I agree with them entirely.

1500

#### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I have a petition submitted to me by David Williamson of Barrhaven which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the community of Barrhaven lacks any secondary schools to educate the large number of students living in this area;

"Whereas Barrhaven is the most rapidly growing community in Ottawa-Carleton;

"Whereas the National Capital Commission's greenbelt severs the community of Barrhaven from Nepean, forcing many students to take potentially dangerous, unsupervised, hour-long trips on public transportation in order to travel to school;

"Whereas many high schools in Nepean are significantly overcrowded;

"Whereas both the Carleton Board of Education and the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board have

undertaken significant cost-saving measures to reduce the construction costs of these high schools;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge the Minister of Education to recognize the unique educational needs of Nepean and provide the funding required to build both of the proposed high schools for Barrhaven."

I have affixed my own signature thereto.

#### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly.

"We, the undersigned, call on the Minister of Health to amend the Ontario Mental Health Act to ensure that people suffering from schizophrenia and related disorders no longer face unreasonable barriers in their attempt to receive treatment in a psychiatric facility; and that patients being treated for schizophrenia and related disorders be allowed adequate time in hospital for treatment to be effective; and that a community treatment order be put in place for those with schizophrenia who need medical treatment to live in the community but are non-compliant and hard to treat."

I affix my name to this petition as well.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** It's obvious that it's been constituency week. The member for Lake Nipigon with a petition.

#### SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the provincial government is planning to make significant changes to the delivery and governance of education in this province; and

"Whereas we as parents believe that school councils should play an important role in education, with clearly defined responsibilities limited to their particular school communities; and

"Whereas we as ratepayers are extremely disturbed that consideration is being given to abolish school boards and eliminate decision-making by locally elected representatives,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the present structure of school boards within the province of Ontario continues to have a major role in governance of schools to deal with board policies as advocates for the students in their community, to provide cost-efficient educational services and to be directly accountable to the parents and local ratepayers."

It's signed by dozens of people in the proud township of Pickle Lake in northwestern Ontario. I have, of course, affixed my name to the petition.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot):** It's a pleasure to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on behalf of the Steelworkers, District 6, United Steelworkers of America.

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, request that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

#### CHILD CARE

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr Speaker, I have a petition to present, and it's not in fact from my constituents but from concerned residents of the Durham area.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Gordon Street Children's Cottage Child Care Centre on the grounds of the Whitby Mental Health Centre has received formal notice by the Ontario Realty Corp to vacate their premises by December 31, 1996; and

"Whereas the closure of the Gordon Street Children's Cottage Child Care Centre will result in the loss of 58 day care spaces in Durham region (Gordon Street provides 10% of all infant care spaces in the region);

"Therefore we, the undersigned, request that the government keep its commitment to this workplace child care centre to ensure that the parents continue to have a choice in quality child care."

I support the concerns and have attached my signature.

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas everyone has the right to personal safety, free from criminal harassment, and all employees have the right to a safe work environment, free from workplace harassment; and

"Whereas sexual harassment is against the law and has rightfully been recognized in the province of Ontario as an occupational health and safety issue; and

"Whereas Theresa Vince was a victim of sexual harassment and Theresa's harasser did murder her at their place of employment, and we do not want her death to have been in vain; and

"Whereas Theresa Vince's family, women's organizations and members of the workforce have been left with serious unanswered questions and fear that this type of violence could happen again; and

"Whereas Theresa Vince was murdered as a result of male violence against women, and male violence against women is a societal issue;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services to launch an inquest into the shooting and death of Theresa Vince by her supervisor at their workplace.

"We further petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure that a special public inquiry follow the inquest.

"We make this petition in memory of Theresa Vince of Chatham, Ontario, for all women and for all employees in every occupation."

This is signed by hundreds of people from all over the province of Ontario.

#### LAND-LEASE COMMUNITIES

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** It's a pleasure today to rise to present a petition on behalf of the homeowners of the Wilmot Creek association in Newcastle. The petition is to supplement a petition presented on October 25 with the addition of some 50 signatures. The tenants petition the province of Ontario to issue separate legislation with respect to land-lease communities and they petition the Legislature of Ontario to commence with an amendment to the legislation as soon as possible.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I have a petition sent to me by Ms Veronica Manuel, the mother of a severely disabled child who is desperate to find and maintain the services she needs to keep her child at home. The petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has recommended a significant reduction of chronic care and psychiatric beds in Thunder Bay, which serves northwestern Ontario; and

"Whereas there is no commitment to reinvest the \$40 million saved back into our community to compensate families and the people who may have to abandon paying professions for the uncompensated one of caregiving, but rather, in the specific case of Veronica Manuel, because of her overwhelming and demanding task as caregiver to a severely handicapped son, she has been forced on to welfare with imposed irrational eligibility criteria, poverty and hardship; and

"Whereas more and more families may also be forced to struggle under these conditions to adequately care for their loved ones, we will not only see a higher rate of unemployment but also the creation of at least two ill people for every original one;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to not only reject this recommendation but to offer adequate compensation to Veronica Manuel, to recognize and support her and remove the irrational eligibility criteria that hinder her."

Thank you, and I sign my name to this petition.

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.



"Whereas all employees have the right to a safe work environment, free from workplace harassment and violence; and

"Whereas sexual harassment has rightfully been recognized in the province of Ontario as an occupational health and safety issue; and

"Whereas workplace harassment is harmful to the health and wellbeing of employees and to their employers; and

"Whereas Theresa Vince was a victim of workplace harassment and Theresa's harasser did murder her at their place of employment, and we do not want her death to have been in vain; and

"Whereas Theresa Vince's family, women's organizations and members of the workforce have been left with serious unanswered questions and fear that this type of violence could happen again;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund a special committee comprised of grass-roots women's organizations, labour, feminist lawyers, employers, diverse communities reflective of the province of Ontario, and parliamentarians. The mandate of the special committee would be to develop recommendations and guidelines that would assist all employers in creating a safe work environment that prevents workplace harassment and violence and ensures a thorough and objective investigation of harassment complaints when circumstances require.

"We make this petition in memory of Theresa Vince of Chatham, Ontario, and for all employees in every occupation."

Again, this is a very lengthy petition signed by hundreds of people throughout Ontario, and I'm proud to affix my signature.

1510

#### DRINKING AND DRIVING

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas 42% of all driving fatalities are alcohol related; and

"Whereas 565 persons died in alcohol-related crashes in Ontario in 1993, the most recent year for which statistics are available, and more than 26,000 drivers were charged with impaired driving in the same year; and

"Whereas 63% of the total convictions for drunk driving in 1993 involved repeat offenders; and

"Whereas every year drinking and driving costs Ontarians \$1.3 billion in personal financial loss, medical expenses and property damage; and

"Whereas the existing measures and penalties have failed to deter chronic impaired drivers from reoffending; and

"Whereas driving is a privilege, not a right, and chronic impaired drivers have failed to take their driving responsibilities seriously;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact Margaret Marland's private member's bill, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act (Impaired Driving), 1996, or similar legislation as soon as possible."

I'm happy to add my support, obviously.

#### ÉCOLES À CHARTE

**Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

«Attendu que le gouvernement de l'Ontario se penche présentement sur la réforme du système de l'éducation et que l'implantation d'écoles à charte représente une option à considérer ;

«Attendu que le gouvernement ne possède pas de politique en matière de création d'écoles à charte et que le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation étudie actuellement le fonctionnement d'écoles à charte existantes ;

«Attendu que le Collège catholique Samuel-Genest d'Ottawa répond depuis 17 ans avec grand succès aux attentes de ses élèves répartis dans toute la région d'Ottawa-Carleton et des environs ;

«Attendu que le Collège catholique Samuel-Genest est maintenant voué à perdre sa mission, son caractère particulier et sa réputation suite aux récentes décisions du Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française de la région d'Ottawa-Carleton ;

«Nous, soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

«Nous, parents et élèves, et élèves du Collège catholique Samuel-Genest d'Ottawa, demandons que le gouvernement de l'Ontario accorde à notre collège le statut d'école à charte à titre de projet pilote pour implantation dès septembre 1997.»

Quelque 2200 personnes ont signé cette pétition.

#### ST MARY'S MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads:

"Whereas the St Mary's Memorial Hospital is critically important to St Mary's from both the health and economic perspectives,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, the Huron-Perth District Health Council, the health-related services study task force and the Minister of Health to support the continuation of St Mary's Memorial Hospital with active chronic beds and 24-hour emergency services to effectively serve the St Mary's and area community."

I take pride in being able to sign this in support. It's about 179 pages, about 4,700 signatures, I'm told.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr Silipo from the standing committee on government agencies, on behalf of Mr Laughren, presented the committee's 24th report.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Pursuant to standing order 106(g)(11), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### ONTARIO COLLEGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 SUR L'ORDRE DES ÉDUCATRICES ET DES ÉDUCATEURS DE LA PETITE ENFANCE DE L'ONTARIO

Mrs McLeod moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 90, An Act to establish the Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators / Projet de loi 90, Loi créant l'Ordre des éducatrices et des éducateurs de la petite enfance de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. Any comments from the Leader of the Opposition?

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr Speaker, I think the title of the bill is self-explanatory. The bill provides in some detail the outline for a College of Early Childhood Educators.

I apologize for the fact that the bill is somewhat late in being tabled because of having moved directly to orders of the day just before the recess, but I hope that every member has received a copy of it and will have an opportunity to consider it in detail before Thursday morning.

### CITIES OF KITCHENER AND WATERLOO ACT, 1996

Mr Leadston moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr71, An Act respecting the City of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

### CITY OF BRAMPTON ACT, 1996

Mr Clement moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr31, An Act respecting the City of Brampton.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

### HEALTH CARE CONSENT AMENDMENT ACT (PARENTAL CONSULTATION), 1996

### LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT LA LOI DE 1996 SUR LE CONSENTEMENT AUX SOINS DE SANTÉ (CONSULTATION PARENTALE)

Mr Klees moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 91, An Act to provide for Parental Consultation under the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 91, Loi prévoyant la consultation parentale aux termes de la Loi de 1996 sur le consentement aux soins de santé.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. Any comments, member for York-Mackenzie?

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** The bill provides for medical practitioners to make a reasonable effort to consult with parents before they administer medical treatment to a child under the age of 16.

## ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGISTS OF ONTARIO ACT, 1996

Mr Hastings moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr40, An Act respecting the Association of Architectural Technologists of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## ROAD SAFETY ACT, 1996 (No. 2) LOI DE 1996 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE (N° 2)

Mr Palladini moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 92, An Act to promote road safety by implementing a safety rating system for commercial carriers and other measures to encourage compliance with and improve enforcement of Ontario's road safety laws and to amend various Acts administered by or affecting the Ministry of Transportation / Projet de loi 92, Loi visant à promouvoir la sécurité routière par la mise en oeuvre d'un programme de cotes de sécurité pour les véhicules de transport utilitaires et d'autres mesures conçues pour favoriser l'observation et améliorer l'application des lois de l'Ontario portant sur la sécurité routière et modifiant diverses lois dont l'application relève du ministère des Transports ou qui le concernent.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** That was succinct. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Any short comments by the Minister of Transportation?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I addressed the contents of the bill in my statement in this House on November 7.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ALCOHOL, GAMING AND CHARITY FUNDING PUBLIC INTEREST ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 RÉGISSANT LES ALCOOLS, LES JEUX ET LE FINANCEMENT DES ORGANISMES DE BIENFAISANCE DANS L'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for third reading of Bill 75, An Act to regulate alcohol and gaming in the public interest, to fund charities through the responsible management of video lotteries and to amend certain statutes related to alcohol and gaming / Projet de loi 75, Loi réglementant les alcools et les jeux dans l'intérêt public, prévoyant le financement des organismes de bienfaisance grâce à la gestion responsable des loteries vidéo et modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait aux alcools et aux jeux.

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** I understand this is the seventh day this bill has been debated at third reading.

I move, pursuant to standing order 47, that this question be now put.



**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** No points of order on this?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** No points of order. It's not debatable.

The member for Brampton South has moved that the question now be put.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1522 to 1552.*

**The Speaker:** Order, please. All those in favour please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Harnick, Charles	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Barrett, Toby	Harris, Michael D.	Runciman, Robert W.
Bassett, Isabel	Hastings, John	Sampson, Rob
Carroll, Jack	Hudak, Tim	Sheehan, Frank
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Skarica, Toni
Clement, Tony	Johns, Helen	Smith, Bruce
Cunningham, Dianne	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Danford, Harry	Johnson, David	Spina, Joseph
DeFaria, Carl	Johnson, Ron	Sterling, Norman W.
Doyle, Ed	Jordan, W. Leo	Stewart, R. Gary
Ecker, Janet	Kells, Morley	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	Klees, Frank	Tilson, David
Eves, Ernie L.	Leach, Al	Tsubouchi, David H.
Fisher, Barbara	Marland, Margaret	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Martiniuk, Gerry	Vankoughnet, Bill
Fox, Gary	Maves, Bart	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Gilchrist, Steve	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Grimmett, Bill	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	O'Toole, John	Young, Terence H.
Hardeman, Ernie	Palladini, Al	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Gerretsen, John	Martin, Tony
Bartolucci, Rick	Grandmaître, Bernard	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Boyd, Marion	Hampton, Howard	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Pouliot, Gilles
Brown, Michael A.	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Caplan, Elinor	Kormos, Peter	Sergio, Mario
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Silipo, Tony
Colle, Mike	Lankin, Frances	Wildman, Bud
Conway, Sean G.	Laughren, Floyd	Wood, Len
Crozier, Bruce	Martel, Shelley	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 62; the nays are 32.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Mr Tsubouchi has moved third reading of Bill 75.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1556 to 1626.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour please stand one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Harnick, Charles	Palladini, Al
Barrett, Toby	Harris, Michael D.	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Bassett, Isabel	Hastings, John	Runciman, Robert W.
Carroll, Jack	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Sheehan, Frank
Clement, Tony	Johns, Helen	Skarica, Toni
Cunningham, Dianne	Johnson, Bert	Smith, Bruce
Danford, Harry	Johnson, David	Snobelen, John
DeFaria, Carl	Johnson, Ron	Spina, Joseph
Doyle, Ed	Jordan, W. Leo	Sterling, Norman W.
Ecker, Janet	Kells, Morley	Stewart, R. Gary
Elliott, Brenda	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
Eves, Ernie L.	Leach, Al	Tilson, David
Fisher, Barbara	Leadston, Gary L.	Tsubouchi, David H.
Flaherty, Jim	Marland, Margaret	Turnbull, David
Fox, Gary	Martiniuk, Gerry	Vankoughnet, Bill
Galt, Doug	Maves, Bart	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Grimmett, Bill	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Guzzo, Garry J.	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	Young, Terence H.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Gerretsen, John	Martel, Shelley
Bartolucci, Rick	Grandmaître, Bernard	Martin, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	McLeod, Lyn
Boyd, Marion	Hampton, Howard	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Kennedy, Gerard	Pouliot, Gilles
Caplan, Elinor	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 63; the nays are 33.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

### BETTER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1996

### LOI DE 1996 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES ADMINISTRATIONS LOCALES

Mr Leach moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 86, An Act to provide for better local government by updating and streamlining the Municipal Elections Act, the Municipal Act and related statutes / Projet de loi 86, Loi prévoyant l'amélioration des administrations locales en modernisant et simplifiant la Loi sur les élections municipales, la Loi sur les municipalités et d'autres lois connexes.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** It's indeed a pleasure today to move the second reading of Bill 86, a bill that I know all members of the Legislature will be anxious to support.

When this government took office we promised to reform the rules that govern municipalities. We knew that municipalities and taxpayers were unhappy with the current system. The laws that control municipalities are far too detailed, details that cost taxpayers money. They get in the way of finding better, more affordable, efficient and more creative ways of doing things. Ontario's municipalities must be strong, democratic and efficient. They must be accountable to the taxpayers who pay the bills.

As the level of government closest to the community, municipalities are well suited to deliver most local services. They need the flexibility to deliver those services as efficiently as they can. Very early on we told the municipal sector that changes would be made.

We said that our priority was to provide Ontarians with more accountable, affordable, efficient government at all levels, realign the provincial-municipal relationship, shift decision-making from Queen's Park to municipalities and give local decision-makers more flexibility to meet local needs and let municipalities chart their own course. We set up an advisory group chaired by my parliamentary assistant, the member for Oxford.

In legislation this past year we gave municipalities more autonomy to make local decisions and better manage their revenues and expenditures. Last spring we appointed the Who Does What panel to provide recommendations on a range of municipal-provincial issues, including what to do about the laws that govern municipalities. This legislation takes into account the recommendations we've received. It's a step towards reducing the red tape that ties municipalities' hands, and we're going to give them more flexibility to run their business as effectively as possible.

We're moving towards a new Municipal Act that will give municipalities broad authority to go about their business. We'll be defining municipal powers in a different way. Rather than spelling them out in the smallest detail, the government will define them broadly, giving municipalities the flexibility they need to meet community needs. The legislation we're debating today is only one step towards this new provincial-municipal relationship. The next step: a broad rewrite of the Municipal Act and other legislation that affects municipalities will be introduced in the spring.

Let me be clear about why we need to move ahead now on this phase. As the members know, the next municipal election takes place in the fall of 1997. The campaign period begins on January 1, when candidates can file their nominations with the clerks and begin raising money. The Who Does What panel recommended that we make changes to the election process quickly so the next election can be conducted with the new rules.

We've also decided to include some other straightforward changes that were ready to go. With elections our goal is to streamline the process and allow municipalities to conduct elections in the most appropriate and efficient ways. Other parts of the legislation give municipalities more certainty with respect to liability and more flexibility when it comes to borrowing and investing.

Let me go over some of the changes we are making to the way municipal councils, school boards and some public utility commissions are elected.

The current municipal election process is long and complicated. Every step is described in detail in the legislation. More than 40 prescribed forms are required, and the election period covers 18 months. That's half the term of a municipal office.

This bill allows municipalities to make changes to the size of council without having to come here to the Legislature or to the OMB. We believe that this will lead to fewer local politicians.

The bill also lets municipalities make changes to their own electoral setup, changing from an at-large system to a ward system, for example, or changing ward boundaries. We've built in the safeguards of allowing appeals and petitions on ward boundary changes to the Ontario Municipal Board.

On the actual running of the election itself, we're making a number of changes as well. Some of the changes are aimed directly at accessibility. Municipalities can open the polls earlier, for example, or hold several advance polls, or even have continuous polling for a week or more.

Some changes are aimed at efficiency. I'm talking about eliminating the requirement for a separate municipal enumeration, eliminating mandatory recounts when the vote is close, and reducing the number of required forms from 40 to five.

Some of the changes may accomplish both goals. We're opening the doors to voting by mail or by phone or by touch screen, for example. This may make it easier for some people to vote and at the same time allow the clerk to conduct the election more efficiently, without affecting — and this is very important — the integrity of the election process.

Let me just touch briefly on a couple of other Municipal Elections Act changes.

We were told that the traditional public posting of voters lists was an invasion of privacy. People will still be able to look at the list in the clerk's office but we are eliminating posting it on telephone polls.

We've also added a requirement that candidates put down a refundable deposit. Frankly, we hope this will restore some credibility to the election process by discouraging frivolous and phantom candidates who have no real interest in running or winning.

Finally, I would like to mention another election-related change. This legislation will allow a municipality, school board or the province to put a referendum question on a local ballot. It will also allow for standalone referenda at times other than during a municipal election without asking the Ontario Municipal Board first.

I know concerns have been raised about the cost of a referendum. I would point out that a municipality will be able to charge back the cost to the government that wants to put the question on the ballot. The government that wants to ask the question will have to decide for itself whether it's worth the cost, and of course it will have to answer to its taxpayers for that decision. Democracy has its price, and taxpayers understand that.

I'd like to turn now to another part of the legislation, the part that deals with municipal debt and investment. I'd like to take a moment to address a concern that was raised about debt and investment when the bill was introduced.



It was suggested at that time that we were giving the municipalities greater borrowing capacity. That is not the case. Nothing in this legislation increases the amount of money that municipalities can borrow. The current limitations continue to apply. The aim of this legislation is to let municipalities borrow the same amount more efficiently at a lower cost, and it will also give them more flexibility to get better rates when they invest. Municipalities have generally proven themselves to be competent, prudent and sophisticated financial managers.

Let me just run down some of the changes we're going to make.

We are permitting municipalities to invest standardized ranges of instruments. At the same time, we will not permit them to invest in corporate stocks.

We will permit municipalities with at least a AA- credit rating to issue variable rate debentures, subject to certain conditions.

We will allow municipalities and other broader public sector bodies, such as school boards and hospitals, to cover off each other's short-term borrowing requirements.

We are permitting municipalities to make interest payments more frequently than semiannually. This will enable them to attract investors who need a monthly income stream.

1640

One of the things municipalities had been very concerned about recently is their exposure to liability. They say large damage awards have effectively set municipal service delivery standards that are very expensive to meet. They have also led to an escalation in insurance premiums. What municipalities have asked for is predictable legal liability. This will allow them to plan and to buy affordable insurance.

This legislation will protect municipalities and public utilities commissions from claims in nuisance when municipal sewer and water systems fail. The municipalities will still be liable for negligence. This has been a big area of concern for municipalities since 1989, when a Supreme Court of Canada decision held a municipality responsible for this type of nuisance claim. This legislation will simply mean a return to the situation that existed before that decision. Several other provinces have already moved in this direction.

In the area of negligence, we're giving municipalities more certainty about the standards of care that will be expected of them as they go about their job of keeping roads and bridges in repair. In the case of roads and bridges, the Ministry of Transportation is being given regulatory powers to set standards for municipalities. Meeting those standards would help protect municipalities from liability claims. A process is now being set up to allow municipalities and others to participate in the setting of those standards. Limits to liability that have been applied by the courts are also being codified. For example, the law will be clear that municipalities have to keep roads and bridges in reasonable repair. What is reasonable will be related to a number of factors such as the character of the road or bridge or where it is located. The law will also be clear: A municipality will not be liable if it did not know of a road or bridge disrepair and could not reasonably have known.

In the same spirit, a municipality's protection from liability when it takes reasonable steps to prevent disrepair or to remedy it will also be codified. Limits on liability that have been applied by the courts with respect to discretionary municipal functions such as providing advice are also being codified.

There are other things municipalities have asked for in the area of municipality. Dealing with some of these would have impacts far beyond the municipal sector. We will therefore be taking a more detailed look at some of the other liability issues related to building inspections, occupiers' liability and joint and several liability. If changes are required, we hope to deal with them in the second phase of municipal reform next spring.

The bill also makes changes related to community transportation action programs. These changes will help communities do more for less by better coordinating their existing transportation facilities.

Let me sum up by saying that this piece of legislation has been well received by the municipal sector. The president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario has indicated that the association supports it.

This legislation will give municipalities more authority and greater flexibility to govern and to deliver services effectively. As I said earlier, this bill is just one step towards larger changes in the way Ontario is governed.

First, we gave municipalities greater authority to restructure their operation and save money. This bill, the Better Local Government Act, gives municipalities more flexibility with respect to the municipal process, debt and investment and community transportation, and it gives them more certainty with respect to liability. Next spring we'll introduce a new Municipal Act and make changes to other legislation that affects municipalities. By the beginning of 1998, the public sector will be streamlined and more cost-effective and taxpayers will know who is making the spending decisions.

The laws that guide local government activities will be streamlined, provincial regulations will be cut back and we'll save taxpayers' money by reducing overlap without compromising the quality of the services they receive. This legislation is an important step to achieving that goal, and I'm so encouraged to see the members of the opposition throwing in their support.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments or questions?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Thank you for the opportunity to respond. First of all, of course, this is the government which, having imposed regional government on so many areas of the province, is now about to impose even larger regional government on people, keeping it even further from the people of this province.

I hope you don't show up in the Niagara region with one of your plans, such as you have in Metro, to abolish the local municipalities and we'll have one regional municipality, because you'll have a revolution in the Niagara region if you show up with that.

Second, the proof is out there. I looked at the studies by Dr Joseph Kushner of Brock University and Dr Harry Kitchen of Trent University which clearly show that there are no economies of scale such as you are pretending



there are in future with the bills that are being brought forward by your cabinet.

The fact that you're going to allow municipalities to change the size of council without the support of the provincial government or of the OMB is a very dangerous precedent because you're allowing those in elected office at this time to make the decisions for the future. If you're going to have a referendum, that may make some sense at the municipal level, but not leaving it to the local council.

Second, the comment that fewer representatives are automatically better at any level of government — sometimes they are; sometimes they're not — is an insult to every elected person in this province. What it really means is you want to turn it over to the corporate sector and to the most privileged people in the province who have power outside of the political process. The fact that you want to do that really speaks volumes because the elected representatives are the only people that people can get at. We are responsible. The corporation presidents are responsible to nobody. The advisers, the civil servants, are not responsible directly to the people. I think that will be a retrograde step.

We will look forward to a full debate on this bill because we think there are some parts that are worthy of support and some that are worthy of criticism.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** As the previous member said, there are some parts of this bill that we actually agree with, if not for any other reason but that they might prove to be interesting in the next elections at the provincial board level. For example, the government says they want to be able to put forward some questions, give the boards the opportunity to put questions on the next referendum.

I wonder if the minister would agree with some of the following questions that I would like to see school boards ask the citizens across this province, such as, "Do you agree with the cuts that the Mike Harris government is giving to education?" or, conversely, "Do you love the cuts?" That would be one possible question. "Is the Minister of Education causing a crisis in education?" would be the structure of another question. You could also ask, "Do you think the Tories lied when they promised no classroom funding?" That would be a possible question they can ask. Or you can say, "Do you know of any classroom that hasn't been cut by the provincial Tory government?" That's another possible question they can ask. The best one would be that last election Premier Harris said he would eat his straw hat if any educational cuts were done and it were to affect classroom education. The question could be, "Will that be salt or will that be pepper on that hat?" as he has to eat it.

I find another part of the legislation interesting, especially coming from the minister himself who says he wants to change the deposit requirements so that he can eliminate frivolous candidates. I would say to the minister, this is hilarious. Look in the mirror. You ran an election, sir, where you won with 32% of the vote, and one of the ways that you do that in our democratic system is by having many, many candidates. Is this because you think some of those candidates —

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Did he put up straw candidates?

**Mr Bisson:** — and the other ones were straw or fictitious candidates? Do you think there are people who ran against you the last time who were frivolous? I would say to the minister, I think it is dangerous to go that route because what elections are all about is to give every citizen in this province an opportunity to be able to stand as a candidate and have his or her name stand on the ballot so that people can make the choice, and the government shouldn't take that away from them.

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** It's my pleasure to thank the honourable member, the minister, for his comments in introducing this bill.

I just have to say to you and, through you, to the opposition benches, what are they afraid of when it comes to referendums? Why do they try to belittle the idea that there are legitimate public policy issues that can be discussed at length by the people of Ontario? Do they not trust the people of Ontario to make a proper decision? Maybe they didn't like the decision in the last provincial election, but I, for one, do trust that when they have the appropriate means to get the right kinds of information in front of them, they can make decisions as good as or better than members in this House. Perhaps, as the honourable member says, that's an insult to members of this House. It is not meant to be an insult; it's meant to be a reality check on the fact that people in the constituencies are just as literate, just as numerate, know as much about the issues as perhaps some members in this House.

1650

I, for one, welcome the idea that we can push down some of the power to the people so that they can have their legitimate say. There is nothing illegitimate about that. There is nothing desensitizing or delegitimizing about that. That is simply saying that our political process has changed, that we want to have more of an opportunity for people to have their say on the ongoing issues of the day that affect them in their communities. I, for one, applaud our government for taking the step to do that.

For another point, I would simply say in the time I have available that we are moving ahead on some reforms that have been demanded by the municipalities for a number of years, saying, "Look, give us some more tools so we can run our elections in a way that we think is appropriate, run our municipalities in a way that makes sense for us, and we can do a better job for the taxpayers of Ontario." I, for one, support that.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I want to say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs that he's been a busy boy. There seems to be much in Bill 86 that will engage the debate of members and citizens generally. I must say, unlike my friend the member for St Catharines, who I thought was being a little tough, I see aspects here that I think a reasonable person would want to support.

I say to the previous speaker, we've had a rich history in Ontario of municipal referenda. You haven't lived until you've been through a fluoridation plebiscite. You haven't lived until you've been through, "Shall we be wet or shall we be dry?" I tell you, it is a character-building, life-expanding experience. I wouldn't want anyone to go to their grave without having had the experience.

I just want to say to the minister that I think this is a dynamic process. From time to time, we do want to



change the way in which we organize and govern ourselves municipally. But the people I represent and the people I talk to and listen to expect that all of this is going to be about streamlining services, reducing bureaucracy and, at the very least, moderating the tax burden. While there will be much debate and many bills and more amendments, at the end of the day this minister and his colleagues in government, particularly in this business of municipal restructuring, are going to be judged by just how well they streamline and render more efficient the delivery of services and moderate the tax burden. If they meet that challenge, they will win; if they fail to do it, I suspect they will have a contrary result.

**The Acting Speaker:** The minister from St George-St David has two minutes to respond.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I think what is recognized by all sides of the House is that the status quo in many instances is not acceptable and that we have to move quickly into the 21st century; and that the changes being proposed with this legislation will allow municipalities to act with more autonomy, with more authority, which will give them the opportunity to determine their own destinies in many, many instances.

I would like to point out to the members opposite that most municipalities know that there is a need for change. Of the 815 municipalities, more than half of them are presently in some form of restructuring through amalgamations and other means. There are over 100 restructuring proposals going on, affecting close to 400 municipalities. So the people at the local level recognize that there's a need to restructure, to be more efficient and to be more effective and to reduce duplication and get rid of waste. We're going to help them do that with this legislation. I know that we'll have the support of all members of the House in doing that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr John Gerretsen:** First of all, I'd request permission to split my time with the member for Oakwood.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is it agreed that the time be split? Agreed.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The first thing I would like to say is that the minister talked about bringing in a new Municipal Act next spring, and I think it would have been a lot more helpful at the local level of government and for the people of Ontario if the government had come up with a plan of what all the various changes they want to implement are all about.

I think one of the greatest difficulties people have currently is, who is going to provide what exactly? How do municipalities adequately know how to restructure or to get involved in these restructuring discussions when they really don't know what kind of services they're going to be expected to deliver? For example, are the education costs still going to be left on the property tax roll? Who's going to pay for policing? Who's going to be responsible for the social service costs in this province? Is it going to be left with the municipalities or is it going to be taken over entirely by the provincial government? They don't know what the end result of the whole exercise is going to be.

The other thing they expect is that when a piece of legislation comes forward, it can be explained to them in

a straightforward manner and it's not subject to a lot of doubletalk.

We all remember what happened with Bill 26. That was a bill in which basically the municipalities were told one day, "Yes, you can have and impose things like sales taxes, gasoline taxes, even income tax," and the next day they were told by the minister that really wasn't included in the act. Yet a lot of municipal leaders were running around, such as Mayor McCallion of Mississauga, as a matter of fact, who were very happy because they thought municipalities were going to be given a lot more powers and a lot more authority than they ever had before. There was a big shemozzle about it — was it really included? wasn't it included? — and nobody really knew until, at the end of the day, it was straightened out in the amendments about what kind of taxes could be levied at the local level.

I think the first thing we learned from that is that municipalities want to be told clearly what their responsibilities are going to be, what services they are expected to deliver; and (2) what kind of mechanisms and instruments they can put into place to raise the necessary revenues to operate on.

The whole question of education taxes is of huge interest to municipalities. I would say that in most municipalities right now the education portion of the property tax roll is probably anywhere from 50% to 70% of the total amount of local taxes, property taxes collected locally. If there's going to be a new arrangement as to how education's going to be funded in Ontario, before we get involved in any of these governance discussions I think the municipalities have a right to know what the arrangements are going to be.

The big fear I have is that with all this restructuring — the minister has said on a number of occasions that it's his intent to do away with two thirds of the municipalities. You're also, of course, doing away with two thirds of the representation. It always seems to me that one of the reasons the structure of local government, indeed of school boards, has worked extremely well in this province over the last 100 to 150 years in the case of school boards is because of the local representation factor you have.

There is nothing better, in my view, than the taxpayer in a small municipality being able to call up the councillor or reeve or deputy reeve who lives down the concession line or one or two concessions over or what have you to talk about a practical problem that person is involved in as far as municipal services are concerned.

No matter how you cut it, if we get rid of two thirds of the municipalities in this province, if we get rid of most of the school boards in this province — and we really don't know what's going to happen there; one day we get musings or a statement to the effect that all school boards may be gone, another day we hear there may be five or six school boards left at the end of the day, and then the next day it's something else again — the bottom line is that there's going to be less local representation. Once you have less local representation, obviously there's going to be less democracy involved.

1700

I think this is an issue there has been very little attention paid to, quite frankly, in all the media discussions and



all the media reports at all levels that we've seen over the last six or seven months. I know there may be some people out there in Ontario, and indeed the government is certainly of the view that we'd all be better off with less representation at the local level, but I think if people really examine that, I'm not sure we'd all come to the same conclusion. I would certainly not come to that conclusion, particularly when you take into account the fact that most local representatives, whether they're at the school board, at the hydro commission or at the municipal level probably don't earn more than about \$3,000 to \$4,000 to \$5,000 per year.

If you're going to have fewer representatives and if they're going to operate in larger venues, if they're going to operate in larger ridings, the likelihood of those people becoming full-time politicians at a much higher cost than what we're currently paying them is quite high, and that's not even addressing the issue of whether or not you want permanent or full-time politicians at the local level, which is certainly something I think in most municipalities would not be very well received.

It always seemed to me that the moment you become full-time at the local level, you almost become part of the system, you become part of the bureaucracy, and there's even a greater need by that individual to hang on to that position. Even more decisions are made purely on the basis of how it will affect that particular person in the next election or so. It always seemed to me that one of the reasons local government and school board governance have worked well in Ontario is that people aren't really part of the system, that they aren't part of the bureaucracy, that they're outside of it. The constant change we get there will continue with the part-time politicians.

The other thing that's very interesting is that the minister keeps talking about smaller government. What does his press release say? "The goal is smaller, more efficient and affordable government at all levels." If there's one thing we have seen with the whole regional governments that were adopted back in the 1960s and 1970s — the same goals were promoted at that time — it's that governments certainly didn't become cheaper. With the larger units you're going to have, you may end up with a government that in effect is much more expensive.

It's also very interesting to note — my colleague from Oakwood will have much more to say about that a little bit later on — that whereas for the rest of the province the restructuring model as set out in Bill 26 has been implemented, for the Metro Toronto area this is not the case at all. It was almost like a ministerial statement that came out that the six municipalities in Metro Toronto were going to be merged into one and that was all there was to it. Then when there was quite a to-do about it, the minister said, "We're going to put it on hold for 30 days to see what in effect the six municipalities can come up with." That process is quite a bit different from the process that has taken place elsewhere in Ontario.

The other very interesting thing is, let's go down to the base root of what this is really all about. Why do we want to create these larger units? The minister talked about, "It's in order to shift the decision-making." Well, that's only part of the equation. The other thing is that it will shift the financial responsibility as well. We've already

seen that happen. Municipal grants were cut by anywhere from 20% to 40% last year, and rather than the government honestly stepping forward and saying, "Look, it is our intent over the next two or three years to completely eliminate all municipal grants and all municipal subsidies," they come about it in a roundabout way by saying, "What we really want are larger units and when we get these larger units, there in effect will be larger assessment bases that will then be able to get the necessary taxes to pay for a lot of the costs that are currently being paid for by the grants and subsidy system that operates in Ontario."

Basically, the larger units will have to become totally self-sufficient and not rely upon any kind of provincial subsidy or grants. That may be all right for some municipalities, but I think you and I know, Mr Speaker, that there are many smaller municipalities that could simply never make it on their own before to start any kind of a capital project. I think it's fair to say that most capital projects any municipality is involved in have always required not only the approval of the provincial government but usually provincial funding, with anywhere from 50% to 75%, depending upon what the program was. Of course, if those grants and subsidies are gone, the only way any of the major capital projects could ever be done by any of the municipalities is to create the larger units. That is the real reason these larger units are created.

It has nothing to do with the cost of government necessarily, particularly at the representative level, since as I've already indicated most of the municipal councillors out there do it on a part-time basis and certainly are not making excessive salaries. What it has to do with is that the province basically wants to get out of all subsidies, all grants, and the only way municipalities can then do some of the larger capital projects is if they have a larger tax base, and the only way you can do it is by bringing four or five municipalities together under one jurisdiction. What you lose in that is that the number of representatives you used to have in that whole area will be greatly reduced and in effect the democratic aspects of the ability of the local taxpayer being able to get hold of his or her local representative will be gone to a large extent.

This is something that bears a lot of discussion because it's interesting how in the province of Ontario, particularly over the last 40 to 50 years, it's fair to say that governments have usually made changes in an incremental way. They haven't come forward with massive changes like this, with massive funding changes. Before we make any massive change, and I think this is a massive change we're about to embark on in not only this area but also other areas such as health care etc that we've already dealt with in this House, we'd better take a sober second look. We'd better put a bill like this out for discussion and public consultation.

The bill also talks about the greater borrowing powers. It's very interesting how the minister said, "We're not really giving municipalities greater borrowing powers." I guess what he's really saying is, "We're just allowing them a greater number of instruments that they could possibly use as borrowing mechanisms." As far as I can see, that's exactly the same thing. What we're doing is the municipalities in effect will be allowed to borrow from a



much greater base of borrowing instruments than they were before. Why? What I would suggest is that it's necessary to fund some of those capital projects I talked about a little bit earlier.

If the province is no longer willing to come up with 50% or 75% of the grants or subsidies that were necessary to fund these, municipalities will need that ability and that power to borrow to a much greater extent. That's the real reason behind it. There's a complete shift, as we can see, in the decision-making process, and it will just get tougher and tougher for municipalities as we go along.

In dealing with the Municipal Elections Act changes, it's very interesting that most of the changes I think we can certainly support. The easier we make it for people to exercise their franchise, the better our system will be. I think we should bear in mind, though, that these kinds of methods have been tried before, yet I don't suppose the turnout percentage at the local level has really increased all that much over the last 20 to 25 years. It's sad to say that at local elections you're lucky if you get anywhere from 30% to 40% of the electorate out.

1710

We certainly concur with the notion that the election list no longer be published on telephone poles. I think it's very interesting that this was a suggestion made by a Liberal colleague of ours, the member for Ottawa South, in I think private member's Bill 2 earlier last year when he suggested that these lists no longer be published, so I am glad to see the government has taken up that challenge and is moving that way.

The recommendation that the act makes it easier for people to vote in municipal elections by phone, mail, computer and the Internet etc of course is very laudatory. I think what's interesting, and the clerks in some municipalities have indicated this to me, is that by allowing this to happen, will there be pressure placed on municipalities to put these kinds of services into effect? And will municipalities be able to afford these new kinds of systems that there undoubtedly will be some requests for when they've already got so many other costs they have to pay for now that they didn't have to pay before?

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** The real clerks talk with their elected members all the time.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I am glad to see that the member for Lake Nipigon is paying close attention to this. I am sure he's just enthralled by this act and by the arguments that are presented on it.

The other issue about which there is some concern by municipal clerks and treasurers deals with this combined registration and nomination form. It's my understanding that under the old system a candidate could register that he or she wanted to run for a particular post but wasn't nominated until much closer to the election or to nomination day and registration was necessary so that person then could try to collect some of the funds that are required to run in the election.

It is now my understanding that in this new act the form will be combined, so if somebody wants to file one of these forms on January 1 or 2 in an election year, they have to state what office they want to run for. I understand the clerks have some concern because in the end

that person may very well want to run for a totally different office.

The other concern I had dealt with section 35 of the new act. I'll get the precise section here for you, Mr Speaker, because I am sure you'd be as interested as the member for Lake Nipigon in getting the full meaning of this.

The section says:

"The clerk shall examine each nomination that has been filed....

"(3) If not satisfied that a person is qualified to be nominated or that the nomination complies with this act, the clerk shall reject the nomination."

It's been brought to my attention that the clerks certainly would like to have much more guidance than what's stated in the act. It basically states in the act that clerk can reject the nomination. They don't want to be held personally responsible — that's issue number one — in the event that they make the wrong choice and get challenged on it in court. So they would like to see the authority the clerk has to reject a particular nomination form be much more specifically spelled out.

Now, that can be done by regulations, although I think we would prefer to see it in the act itself. Let's have some of the reasons for the basis on which a clerk can reject a nomination paper. They've suggested such things as, for example, if a person fails to provide personal identification, that would be a good enough reason to reject the nomination paper; or a failure to provide the declaration or swearing that they are qualified to be nominated; or if a person were to fail to file a proper form that undoubtedly will come with the act as one of the schedules, a clerk can reject the nomination; or the failure to provide the necessary financial forms would be another reason.

In other words, the clerks don't want to be placed in a position where the reason for a rejection can be so broad that it gives them too much discretion in this matter. They feel their job should be a specific job, that if the particular requirements of the act are not specifically adhered to, that should be the only reason for which they can reject the nomination form. They want those reasons for rejection firmly spelled out in the act.

That's something that can be discussed at the committee level. We'd certainly want to hear from the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers on an issue like that.

They also pointed out to me that in the section dealing with referendums, there's absolutely no time limit to it. I think it's only reasonable that for a referendum to take place at, let's say, a municipal election, the referendum questions be submitted and be approved no later than, let's say, nomination day. Obviously, the clerks would need to have some time to put the necessary paperwork into effect.

They also say that if referendums are to be held at times other than municipal election times, there ought to be a time requirement, that a minimum of 60 days, let's say, would be required for a referendum question to be put to the general public. Right now there's no time limit in the act at all, and again that's something that can be ironed out later on.



There's also the question of costs. It's kind of interesting that in subsection 7(1) of the act it specifically states, "Unless an act specifically provides otherwise, the costs incurred by the clerk of a local municipality in conducting an election shall be paid by the local municipality." In other words, all the election costs are to be paid by a local municipality whether we're talking about an election dealing with a school board, with a hydro commission or a local municipal election.

It's my understanding that in the advice a lot of the ministry people have been giving to municipalities over the last year or so, ever since Bill 26 was implemented, they have been telling them that some of the costs with respect to, let's say, the education election for trustees etc can be charged back by a municipality to the school board or to the hydro commission. That's the interpretation the ministry staff have been giving to the local municipalities, so there's been this feeling over the last year or so that some of the election costs can be charged back to the school boards. This section here seems to revert right back to the way it was before Bill 26, that is, that municipalities will have to pay entirely for the elections that take place every three years or so.

That is a situation that the clerks are certainly concerned about and that I think municipalities themselves are concerned about. To run a municipal election every three years or so is a fairly expensive operation for a municipality to be involved with, and they had hoped that one of the positive benefits to come out of Bill 26 would be that at least some of the election costs could be shared with school boards. That seems to have been dashed in subsection 7(1), and that should definitely be revisited once this matter goes to committee.

There are a number of other interesting aspects to this bill, and those deal with the transportation aspects. The only thing I want to say about this, because I'm sure my colleague from Oakwood will have something to say about this as well, deals with this whole underlying notion that the transit system can be privatized to a much greater degree than it currently is. If that happens — if, for example, we put children who are currently riding school buses on buses that may not have the same kind of safety requirements etc — what is that going to do to those children from a safety viewpoint?

1720

The overall concern we have deals with the fact that I hope in this privatization mode or notion we are not offering up the safety of individuals, particularly of children who are using the transit system. We're worried about that, because we've seen with this government in the past that sometimes, when matters are presented in a certain way, the way it comes out a week or two later as a result of questions or as a result of presentations etc is quite a bit different from the way it was originally presented to us. So we certainly want to leave that matter open for discussion until a later date.

It's also very interesting to note that there seems to have been a totally different way — I notice that the member for Renfrew North talked about this earlier. I'm talking about the way ward boundaries can be changed, the fact that regional governments are dealt with in a different way from local governments when it comes to

their ability to change the representation within that municipality.

I completely concur with the member for Renfrew North. As he stated earlier, it seems rather odd that the councillors of the municipality should be given the right unto themselves as to whether there should be more or fewer of them. I would have thought this is the one area the provincial government, to which municipalities are basically responsible, would want to keep for itself. Certainly the question that the body itself can decide upon representation has got to be the greatest conflict of interest that any body can have, in determining whether there should be fewer or more of their members.

We'll have to wait and see what the minister and perhaps the parliamentary assistant have to say about that. It seems to me that's got to be a large conflict and it could lead to all sorts of confusion out there and could lead to all sorts of misdirection as well. I certainly wouldn't want my local council to decide overnight that it wanted to, let's say, reduce itself from the 11 people who are currently there to five — or the other way around, for that matter. I think there's a provincial interest there, but there's also much more than that: There's a local interest in that as well. I think those kinds of issues should almost be mandated as being matters for a referendum.

The issue relating to municipal liability is an interesting one as well. I realize there have been a number of significant court cases over the last number of years, starting with the decision the ministry referred to back in 1989, in which municipalities were, originally at least, held to account for an awful lot of money as far as judgements against them were concerned. But I think there's a tendency to overreact in cases like this. Yes, that may have happened in one particular case. It may even have happened in two or three cases. But I would still like to make sure we adhere to the general principle that if somebody wants to bring a claim forward, whether or not it's against an individual or against a municipality, they ought to be judged by the same standards and they ought to be adjudicated by exactly the same standards. I don't think municipalities should get any more additional powers. In other words, the rules against them shouldn't be any stricter, but I don't think they should be any less strict either.

I think that when we start playing around with it in an act like this, there's always a tendency at the end of the day for us to forget about the people who are really involved in this. Those are the people who live in the municipalities, who may at any one particular time either have an action against that municipality or not. I would hope the position we would take is that we would allow the court system itself to adjudicate as to what the liability is and how much money ought to be paid in that case.

It seems to me that if we start setting out special cases or we start setting out special criteria whereby we make municipal liability different than the personal liability that each one of us has out there as members of the general public, in the long run we end up the losers in that. I think that municipalities ought to be held to exactly the same standards as individuals, and I don't think that is necessarily the case here.



There was another concern that was raised to me in a very interesting letter that I received from an individual in Ottawa. It dealt with the ability of the blind to vote under this act. I'll just read to you a couple of paragraphs that I think set out the concern. I certainly hope this is something the ministry will take into account, because the point that is raised is very well stated.

"Bill 86 as presently written will not assure to blind voters the exercise of the ordinary right to vote in secret, nor will it reduce the likelihood of legal action by blind persons in future seeking to enforce their right, like those following the 1994 municipal election in the city of Ottawa.

"The needed changes are as follows:

"(1) The addition of a clause explicitly requiring that blind voters be accommodated in municipal elections by means which ensure that they can cast a secret vote, and that they can do so without the assistance of another person if they so choose.

"(2) The bill leaves discretion in the hands of the city clerk as to the manner of such accommodation." This letter specifically points to section 41. "The clerk is certainly not left with discretion as to the manner in which he or she is to provide for sighted voters to cast a secret ballot. Imagine the myriad of errors and the endless legal contests that would result from the oversights of well-meaning city clerks if they had to devise for themselves effective means for enabling all voters to cast secret votes. Although blind voters are fewer, the range of mistakes possible for city clerks in accommodating them is bound to lead to further trouble. The form of accommodation must be uniform for all municipalities, whether specified in legislation or in regulation.

"Whatever form of accommodation is prescribed, it must be available to blind voters without requiring them to make a formal application for it, thus creating a paper trail that jeopardizes the secrecy of their vote. For instance, electronic voting by blind persons based on the use of a special PIN number would permit a blind person to vote secretly and independently, but suppose there were only one or two blind voters in the polling unit.

"(3) Ballots used by blind voters must not be distinguishable from others' ballots during the counting. If a notched ballot is used for a blind voter, the ballots of all voters must be notched."

I think it's a very interesting situation that this person brings up. I'm not sure whether the ministry has looked at it. I certainly think it's something that ought to be taken into account because, after all, what's most important is that the secrecy of the ballot be maintained. That's what this letter is all about, and I think that's what the concern is all about. It's certainly something we should take into consideration.

1730

The other area of the bill that I think will save municipalities a lot of money in the future is this notion that municipal enumerations at every election will no longer be required as a matter of course. I think we have to be careful with that, though. As we all know, a lot of people in this province move. There's got to be a procedure, and a very easy procedure, whereby people can in effect be added on to the municipal roll if they happen to move

between municipal elections. I know there's a cost to democracy, and this is certainly one cost, the cost of preparing for an election and the cost of doing the necessary enumerations. Although we may say, "This is going to save an awful lot of money," let's make sure the citizens of Ontario, the residents of this province, are aware of the methods by which they can be assured that they are on the enumeration rolls if they happen to move.

Obviously there's going to be an education process involved with that. I think the ministry certainly ought to undertake that to some extent because, as I've already stated, with the low turnout that most municipalities already encounter at election time, it would be a travesty if that would get even worse because people show up to vote and in effect don't have the ability to do so because they've been left off the list.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There's no quorum in the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Will the table please check?

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Kingston and The Islands.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Well, Mr Speaker, I'm glad to see all the members returning to this tremendous speech. I'm sure they were all taking this in in their offices and watching it with tremendous interest. I know they're just totally taken in by it.

That point of order may have come at about the right time because I think I've just about said everything I would like to say at this stage. I would like to state, though, that it's certainly our position that we would like this bill to be referred to committee, not for an unduly long period of time but certainly for a week or so, for the particular groups that are out there such as the clerks and treasurers, and there may be many individuals out there as well or particular ratepayer groups that may wish to say something about this bill. After all, I think if there's one thing we hope to accomplish with a bill like this, it is that it will in effect give more people the ability to vote in a municipal election.

All of us who have been involved at the municipal level at some point or another have always been discouraged by the fact that the municipal elections are usually the lowest turnouts of any of the three levels of government. Anything that a government can do in order to make sure that more people turn out to vote, whether it's through electronic voting, through voting by mail or by telephone etc, I think will improve the process.

It's very interesting. We all know there are certain municipalities in this province that have an awful lot of seasonal residents who at one time didn't really actively take part in the local municipal elections. I've already heard of two or three of these townships possibly setting up voting booths right here in the middle of Toronto on election day so that a lot of the cottage owners will have the ability to vote. What that will do to some municipalities in the makeup of their councils etc will be extremely interesting, because so far these people really haven't had



an effective voice in the management or the governance of those municipalities, and that may drastically change the end result of who gets elected and what issues those councils will be dealing with, maybe for the better, maybe for the worse. The bottom line is this: As long as the people who have the ability to vote in a particular area use their franchise and vote, then that's what we're looking for. With that, I'll turn the rest of my time over to the member for Oakwood.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** I think the member for Kingston and The Islands has touched upon a lot of very relevant and concrete areas of concern. As you know, he's had firsthand experience as the mayor of Kingston and also as the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO, so he speaks of real grass-roots involvement in municipal government.

I know it's very fashionable now to talk about eliminating municipal government and about eliminating municipal representation, of downsizing local government, but I think those of us who have served on local government realize how important it is to maintain local representation. In this bill, hopefully the government will move towards enhancing local government and local participation by citizens from all walks of life.

I find it very disconcerting to see that the minister in his press release talked about, "The goal is smaller, more efficient and affordable government." It's the same minister who's flogging this mega-monster city of 2.5 million people to override local government here in Metro, so I'm not sure whether there's going to be one approach for Metro that's going to be a monster, bigger government, and smaller governments somewhere else. I'm not sure if the minister has clarified that, but he certainly is on record as being in favour of this, maybe the biggest municipal government in Canada. In fact, it'll be a new form of government altogether; it won't be local in nature.

Some of the specific concerns: I know the member for Brampton South referred to his support of referenda. I myself support the concept of referenda on the ballot to engage more local participation. I think that's a good direction. But that whole area of referenda is an area that deserves a bit more scrutiny, because if you look at the history of referenda in California, you can see there are some very serious problems with it. I hope this government will attempt to rectify those problems associated with referenda before we go into the referenda approach.

There are two celebrated cases in California which show the problems that can occur. There was one case two years ago in the state of California where the question on the ballot related to the prohibition of smoking in public places. If you look at the wording of the referendum, it looked as if it was actually against the proliferation of smoking in public places, but upon examination the pro-health lobby in California found out that this proposition was actually engineered and sponsored by the pro-smoking lobby. So the pro-smoking lobby, the tobacco companies funded the proposition to go on the ballot. The average voter who picked up the proposition when he or she went into the ballot box thought they were voting to prohibit the proliferation of smoking, but because there was such a slick advertising campaign, so much money

poured into the pro-smoking question, people were confused and actually voted contrary to what their initial reaction would have been.

This is what can happen in referenda and I think the only way you can prohibit this type of deception from taking place is by doing two things: You have to have an independent body, part of the election commission or whatever, look at the wording to make sure it isn't deceptive or confusing. That's critical, especially when you might walk into the ballot box and perhaps, as in California, see 10, 15, up to 100 different questions on that ballot. It can be very confusing to an ordinary voter. We have to have a clear judgement on whether the question is intended to be what it is.

1740

Second, in referenda, is the expenses that are incurred by groups that are against the question or for the question. What happens is that certain lobby groups will spend tens of thousands, if not millions, of dollars pushing a question. It may not be the will of the local populace that wins out, but the will of a very well heeled, very well financed lobby group that will win the question.

Those are the two very dangerous pitfalls when you go down the road to referenda. You have to ensure the question is not ambiguous. You have to ensure the question is clear and objective. I think an impartial person or persons should do that to get away from that discrepancy that may occur. Second, there have to be limits on the financing of people who support the question. In other words, you can't have ordinary citizens who will vote one way or another without any pecuniary interest, yet you might have a huge tobacco lobby.

In Metro, for example, as we know, there's a very serious conflict going on about the right to smoke or not to smoke in bars. You can imagine what would happen if you were to put that question on the ballot in the city of Toronto or the city of North York or in Metro as a whole. I'm sure there would be a lot of groups on both sides that would spend perhaps inordinate amounts of money to try to persuade people that is the way they should vote. There have to be expenditure controls in terms of the amount of money spent during an election period on a referendum and the support it gets through advertising and so forth to try to sway public opinion.

By the way, there was also a very interesting question in California just this last election. The question dealt with employment equity for minority groups in California. The wording looked as if you were actually supporting more hiring of minorities or giving them an equal chance. Instead, the question was actually put forward by groups that were opposed to the hiring of minorities and giving them equal opportunity in California.

It would be wise for the minister, during the debates we have during the committee session, to investigate some of the pitfalls with referenda. But I think in all there is no reason why we can't examine that as part of the electoral process. There are some issues which affect people that people want a say on. Sometimes they are very controversial and it's best to give ordinary people, the voting public, a say.

It might also be a way of getting more people involved in municipal elections. Traditionally one of the problems



with municipal elections is that the voter turnouts range anywhere from 20% to maybe a high of 60%. Low voter turnout is not good for democracy, it's not good for government, so we have to encourage more participation.

I know the minister is talking about using Web sites or the Internet or fax and phone lines to allow people to vote by phone or fax. I think that is worth looking at. I'm not sure it's going to solve the problem, but it's at least worth looking at. The only thing I worry about is how you verify that the person voting by fax or phone is the person doing so. When you go to vote in the polling station, you can be challenged. If your name is not on the voters list, they can challenge you. How would you challenge that person who is voting by fax or by phone? I think during the committee session that should be debated and examined, because that could be something that might be open to abuse if there are no controls. That's something that's worth examining. It might encourage participation.

One of the things that has really discouraged participation at the local level in recent years has been the enumeration process. Municipalities have been very short of moneys for elections and therefore the enumeration processes have been constrained, the staffing for enumeration has been constrained and the enumerations have not been thorough enough to include all the people who are in transition, especially people who live in rental apartments and so forth. There seems to be more of a turnover in certain areas. Thousands of people every municipal election are left off the voters list and subsequently they aren't part of the process.

The document here, Bill 86, talks about not having the lists posted on the corner lampposts, but I don't see what is to replace it. How will we let people know they are on the voters list? This is something that is very important because we want to ensure that the right people who are eligible to vote are on the list, but there has to be a mechanism in place that informs people, that they can come in and be on a list and vote. There has to be some time put in terms of how you get on the list. I know in the United States they use a registration process, but their voter turnouts are certainly no better than ours.

I'm still wondering, and I hope we can get to it in committee and find out, how we can improve the enumeration process so we won't miss thousands and thousands of people and so the process will be publicized. That's the other thing that happens: People sometimes feel that federal and provincial elections are important and tend to think they don't have time for the municipal one. There has to be an attempt to have a thorough enumeration that is verifiable and one that is publicized and that people can use as a way of knowing they have an opportunity to vote.

Also, in terms of the role of the clerk, I certainly have been involved in a number of recounts — about four or five, I guess — at the municipal level and I know that in most cases the clerk is put in a very contentious position because in most municipalities you have an incumbent mayor or councillor who is being challenged by a candidate who has got into a runoff with the recount. It's very difficult for a clerk, I think, to be totally independent, considering that mayor has been part of his or her council for maybe decades.

That clerk is put in a difficult position sometimes of deciding a very critical question against his or her long-time acquaintance. That's not done intentionally, but I think it puts the clerk in a problematic situation. That's why I think the member for Kingston and The Islands is very correct in saying there have to be very specific criteria and direction given to a clerk. Once you give the clerk those specific criteria, you take away that undue burden on that public official. That's one of the amendments or areas we can clarify.

I know the member for Kingston and The Islands has talked about section 52, if I'm not mistaken, but anyway in the area of the clerk deciding certain key things, especially in recounts.

Another area that in terms of particulars was interesting is in regard to nominations. I'm not sure whether it's going to allow for nominations and registrations to be done by fax. I know a number of years ago there was a person who filed for nomination papers by fax with about five minutes to go in a municipal election. That was permitted although it didn't say so in the act. The clerk made a judgement call at five minutes before the hour. I think that should be specified, whether faxing in a nomination will be allowed and will be acceptable in these situations.

As you know, in municipal elections the most unusual things happen, even though you think they will probably not. In the city of Toronto we had a recount that went on for more than a year and a half, at great expense. I hope this legislation is able to clear that up and address that type of prolonged recount, which is very expensive and very troublesome, because the local officials and the ratepayers didn't know who their alderman or their councillor was for a year and a half. It went through about three levels of the judiciary before it was finally decided, I think, by 12 votes. I hope that is addressed, but it can be very complex.

1750

The other thing I'd like to talk about is the community transportation action program. As you know, part of this Bill 86 is an initiative by the Ministry of Transportation, along with four other ministries, to try to coordinate local transportation.

The one comment I'll make about it is that the process so far seems to be somewhat confusing. You're involving so many ministries that the people I've talked to who are trying to get involved in this program find it very confusing. They're not quite sure who's eligible and who isn't. I think there has to be an outreach program from one of the five ministries, at least, to go out to the providers in the community to ensure that if there are moneys available for upgrading community transportation, the money gets to the right people. There is an enormous shortage of community transportation facilities taking place in small and large communities across Ontario. Essentially, because of the demands and cuts to municipal transfer payments, the municipalities can't carry out their traditional role of giving grants and supporting local transportation; therefore, it's more reliant on the non-profit organizations. I know in our area we have St Clair West Meals on Wheels now starting to provide some transportation because of cutbacks to Wheel-Trans, for instance.



I hope this CTAP, as they call it, the community transportation action program, will go out into the community and talk to the providers about how they can work hands-on to make these dollars available to the non-profit agencies that are trying to meet the real needs of people trying to get to doctors appointments or trying to get to functions within their community.

Overall, our first impression is that some of these initiatives in Bill 86 were obviously initiatives that are housekeeping in nature that had to be done. There's a lot of confusion, a lot of paperwork, and it is very confusing for municipal officials and candidates, as it is for voters. Anything that can be done in terms of removing some of these contradictions through Bill 86 will be supported.

I just hope the bill will go through scrutiny in the committee hearings so there can be a hands-on evaluation of some of the proposals, because sometimes the best legislation written by bureaucrats doesn't quite fit when you put it on the street. Many of these bureaucrats have never had to run for office, have never been involved in recounts, have never been involved in voting processes, so I hope it gets out of the academic bureaucratic community and we allow the municipal officials and ratepayer groups to have input in this process. I think it will be better for it, because they're the people who are the real experts.

There's another thing we should keep in mind. I know it's very fashionable and politically correct to talk about downsizing, eliminating politicians, getting rid of local small government: "Make it all bigger. Make it all into one big monster. It's going to be much more efficient and effective." But if you look at the history of Ontario, one of the things that made this province so much a leader is that local government, no matter how small it was, always gave ordinary people a voice, and sometimes there were contradictions and obstacles. But don't be so ready to eliminate all local government. I think the elimination of two thirds of it is too drastic.

There's no doubt and I think all of us agree that the status quo is not acceptable. There has to be some change. There has to be some reform. That is not at issue. What is at issue is the radical eradication of local government and the notion that all local government stands in the way of efficiency. In many cases, many local governments are much more efficient than big government. For a government that's supposed to be an advocate of smaller govern-

ment, I say to you, whether it's Bill 86 or whatever you're proposing, keep in mind that in some cases bigger is better, but in some cases smaller is also better.

I find it an astonishing trend. All of a sudden in Hamilton now we have a mega-government of a million people. We have now a proposal in Metro of a mega-government of two and a half million people. This trend towards megalopolises is one that has to be scrutinized by all of us. It is too easy to say, "Eliminate local government." I think we should eliminate some local government, but not in this radical fashion, and we certainly should do it after we've seen the facts, after we've seen the cost-benefit analysis, after we've looked at the impact on services, after we've looked at the impact on the voice of ordinary people. You can imagine, if you're now in the city of Toronto it's hard enough getting your voice heard if you're one of 600,000 people. But can you imagine if you go to one voice in two and a half million people? Is this local government? I don't think so. This is basically a corporate governance model that has no support except from the bureaucrats. It's a bureaucratic dream to have big government.

Before Bill 86 and these other pieces of legislation which deal with changing local government pass, I hope we look at the history of Ontario and look at the contribution of local government and of local politicians. Certainly we know that there have been some interesting and very important initiatives from local politicians. Not all good government comes from the provincial level or federal level. Small-town mayors and reeves and wardens and councillors and aldermen are the ones who are closest to the people, and they can't avoid dealing with reality. In the ivory towers of Queen's Park and of Parliament Hill, dealing with reality is sometimes a part-time thing. At least locally you meet the voters on a daily basis.

That's the idea that I hope is kept in perspective in terms of Bill 86 and other bills that come forward to deal with reforming government at this level. In the last couple of weeks there have been too many people sloughing it off as just another thing we have to downsize. Let's stop and think before we do that.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** It now being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned till 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD  
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell  
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries  
Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Burlington South / -Sud	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)</b> Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Carleton	<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC)</b> Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC)</b> Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	London North / -Nord	<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Don Mills	<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC)</b> Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Markham	<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC)</b> Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamaria (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC)</b> Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC)</b> Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Durham West / -Ouest	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	Nepean	Baird, John R. (PC)
Eglinton	<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William (PC)</b> Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme	Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nickel Belt	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Nipissing	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)</b> Speaker / Président	Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Oriole	Caplan, Elinor (L)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)
Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)	Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)	Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L)
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Ottawa West / -Ouest	Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)	Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)		



Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Parry Sound	<b>Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.</b> (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	Victoria-Haliburton	<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Waterloo North / -Nord	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b> (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Wellington	Amott, Ted (PC)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Isabel (PC)	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)	Willowdale	<b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles</b> (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
St George-St David	<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Samia	Boushy, Dave (PC)	Windsor-Riverside	Cooke, David S. (ND)
Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
Scarborough-Ellesmere	<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b> (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs	York Mills	Turnbull, David (PC)
		York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ron Johnson  
Marion Boyd, Robert Chiarelli, Sean G. Conway,  
Ed Doyle, Garry J. Guzzo, Tim Hudak,  
Ron Johnson, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston,  
Gerry Martiniuk, John L. Parker, David Ramsay,  
David Tilson, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Alvin Curling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Joseph Cordiano  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Jim Brown,  
Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Tony Clement,  
Joseph Cordiano, Alvin Curling, Morley Kells,  
Peter Kormos, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross,  
Frank Sheehan, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Ted Chudleigh  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tim Hudak  
Ted Arnott, Jim Brown, Annamarie Castrilli,  
Ted Chudleigh, Douglas B. Ford, Tim Hudak,  
Monte Kwinter, Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk,  
Gerry Phillips, Gilles Pouliot, Rob Sampson,  
Joseph Spina, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Jack Carroll  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bart Maves  
Jack Carroll, Harry Danford, Jim Flaherty,  
Bernard Grandmaître, Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese  
Bart Maves, Sandra Papatello, Lillian Ross  
Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona,  
Len Wood, Terence H. Young  
Clerk / Greffier: Lynn Mellor

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo  
Rick Bartolucci, Bruce Crozier, Ed Doyle,  
Douglas B. Ford, Gary Fox, Michael Gravelle,  
Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren,  
Gary L. Leadston, Dan Newman, Peter L. Preston,  
Tony Silipo, Bob Wood  
Clerk / Greffier: Donna Bryce

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Ted Arnott  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Hastings  
Ted Arnott, Rick Bartolucci, Dave Boushy, Carl DeFaria,  
Tom Froese, Bill Grimmett, John Hastings, Ron Johnson,  
Frank Michlash, Gilles E. Morin, John R. O'Toole,  
Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffier: Lisa Freedman

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John L. Parker  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tom Froese  
Elinor Caplan, Carl DeFaria, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese,  
Doug Galt, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Rosario Marchese, Margaret Marland, John L. Parker,  
Lillian Ross, R. Gary Stewart, Len Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Dalton McGuinty  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mike Colle  
Isabel Bassett, Marcel Beaubien, Dave Boushy,  
Gary Carr, Mike Colle, Bruce Crozier, Gary Fox,  
Steve Gilchrist, John Hastings, Gerard Kennedy  
Shelley Martel, Dalton McGuinty, Gilles Pouliot,  
Toni Skarica  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Smith  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Dave Boushy, John Hastings,  
Tony Martin, John R. O'Toole, Trevor Pettit,  
Sandra Papatello, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Tony Ruprecht,  
Mario Sergio, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Resources development /  
Développement des ressources**

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Barbara Fisher  
John R. Baird, Jack Carroll, David Christopherson,  
Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Dwight Duncan,  
Barbara Fisher, Steve Gilchrist, Pat Hoy,  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Bart Maves, Bill Murdoch,  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Président: Richard Patten  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Gerretsen  
David S. Cooke, Janet Ecker, John Gerretsen,  
Michael Gravelle, Helen Johns, W. Leo Jordan,  
Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Julia Munro,  
Dan Newman, Richard Patten, Trevor Pettit,  
Peter L. Preston, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**PREMIÈRE LECTURE**

**Loi de 1996 sur l'Ordre des  
éducatrices et des éducateurs de la  
petite enfance de l'Ontario,**

projet de loi 90, *Mme McLeod*

Adoptée . . . . . 5151

**Loi de 1996 modifiant la Loi de 1996  
sur le consentement aux soins de  
santé (consultation parentale), projet**

de loi 91, *M. Klees*

Adoptée . . . . . 5151

**Loi de 1996 sur la sécurité routière  
(n° 2), projet de loi 92, *M. Palladini***

Adoptée . . . . . 5151

**DEUXIÈME LECTURE**

**Loi de 1996 sur l'amélioration des  
administrations locales,**

Projet de loi 86, *M. Leach*

Débat ajourné . . . . . 5163

**TROISIÈME LECTURE**

**Loi de 1996 régissant les alcools,  
les jeux et le financement des  
organismes de bienfaisance dans  
l'intérêt public,**

projet de loi 75, *M. Tsubouchi*

Adoptée . . . . . 5152



# CONTENTS

Monday 18 November 1996

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Affordable housing</b>	
Mr Bisson	5135
<b>Scarborough Bicentennial</b>	
<b>Award of Merit</b>	
Mr Newman	5135
<b>Children and youth</b>	
Mr McGuinty	5136
<b>Events in Sault Ste Marie</b>	
Mr Martin	5136
<b>Hospital restructuring</b>	
Mr Bartolucci	5136
<b>Equal opportunity plan</b>	
Ms Lankin	5136
<b>Festival of Lights</b>	
Mr Clement	5137

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Physicians' fees</b>	
Mr Cordiano	5138
Mr Wilson	5138
<b>Education financing</b>	
Mr Cordiano	5139
Mr Snobelen	5139
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Mr Hampton	5140
Mr Harnick	5140, 5146
Ms Lankin	5146
<b>Attorney General's comments</b>	
Mr Hampton	5141, 5144
Mr Harnick	5141, 5144
<b>Services for abused women</b>	
Mrs Caplan	5141
Mrs Ecker	5142
Mr Kormos	5142
<b>Vulnerable adults</b>	
Mr Stewart	5142
Mr Jackson	5142
<b>Hospital restructuring</b>	
Mr Gravelle	5143
Mr Wilson	5143
Mrs McLeod	5143
<b>Road safety</b>	
Mrs Marland	5144
Mr Runciman	5145
<b>Services for the disabled</b>	
Mr Agostino	5145
Mr Harris	5145
<b>Liquor control</b>	
Mr Newman	5146
Mr Tsubouchi	5146
<b>Video lottery terminals</b>	
Mr Bradley	5147
Mr Tsubouchi	5147

## PETITIONS

<b>Hospital restructuring</b>	
Mr Bartolucci	5148
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Ms Martel	5148
<b>School facilities</b>	
Mr Baird	5148
<b>Mental health services</b>	
Mr Patten	5148
<b>School boards</b>	
Mr Pouliot	5148
<b>Occupational health and safety</b>	
Mr Leadston	5149
<b>Child care</b>	
Mrs McLeod	5149
<b>Sexual harassment</b>	
Mrs Boyd	5149, 5150
<b>Land-lease communities</b>	
Mr O'Toole	5149
<b>Services for the disabled</b>	
Mr Gravelle	5149
<b>Drinking and driving</b>	
Mrs Marland	5150
<b>St Mary's Memorial Hospital</b>	
Mr Bert Johnson	5150

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on government agencies</b>	
Mr Silipo	5151
Report deemed adopted	5151

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators Act, 1996</b>	
Bill 90, <i>Mrs McLeod</i>	
Mrs McLeod	5151
Agreed to	5151
<b>Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo Act, 1996, Bill Pr71, Mr Leadston</b>	
Agreed to	5151
<b>City of Brampton Act, 1996, Bill Pr31, Mr Clement</b>	
Agreed to	5151
<b>Health Care Consent Amendment Act (Parental Consultation), 1996, Bill 91, Mr Klees</b>	
Mr Klees	5151
Agreed to	5151
<b>Association of Architectural Technologists of Ontario Act, 1996</b>	
Bill Pr40, <i>Mr Hastings</i>	
Agreed to	5151

## Road Safety Act, 1996 (No.2)

Bill 92, <i>Mr Palladini</i>	
Mr Palladini	5151
Agreed to	5151

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Better Local Government Act, 1996, Bill 86, Mr Leach</b>	
Mr Leach	5153, 5156
Mr Bradley	5155
Mr Bisson	5155
Mr Clement	5155
Mr Conway	5156
Mr Gerretsen	5156
Mr Colle	5161
Debate adjourned	5163

## THIRD READINGS

<b>Alcohol, Gaming and Charity Funding Public Interest Act, 1996, Bill 75, Mr Tsubouchi</b>	
Agreed to	5152

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Ombudsman's case report</b>	
The Speaker	5137
<b>Speaker's ruling</b>	
The Speaker	5138
Mr Wildman	5138
<b>Visitors</b>	
The Speaker	5144

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 18 novembre 1996

## AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Services en français</b>	
M. Grandmaître	5135
Mr Doyle	5136

## PÉTITIONS

<b>Écoles à charte</b>	
Mr Grandmaître	5150

continued overleaf

AZ ON  
1  
> 23



No. 124

N° 124

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 19 November 1996

Mardi 19 novembre 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 19 November 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 19 novembre 1996

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I stand up today with a sense of frustration and anger that is quite literally difficult to express in words. The absolute mess and chaos in the family support office and how that has affected the lives of thousands of women and children across the province is a disgrace and a terrible example of a mean-spirited government policy gone wrong.

Since the start of this year we were aware of the Harris plan to close the regional offices, to lay off 300 dedicated staff and to save money by centralizing the operations in a cold 1-800 world. In their horrid haste to downsize and help fund their tax scheme, nobody would listen to the alternatives suggested, not by those of us in opposition or by their very own staff in the regional offices.

When the government stubbornly went ahead with its plans to close the offices, including the one in Thunder Bay, absolute chaos resulted. Almost every day we have to listen to the Attorney General telling us that his plan is working when he knows full well that is not the case.

Minister, people's lives are being destroyed, and your stubbornness in not admitting your mistake and doing what needs to be done to fix the problem is infuriating. Hire the staff that is needed so that when people call the plan, somebody answers. Stand up today and apologize to the women and children of this province who can't pay their rent, buy food for their children or heat their homes because of your incompetence.

Christmas is fast approaching. Fix this plan before further tragedies result. The hundreds of constituents in my riding who are desperate for help deserve nothing less.

### FIRE SAFETY

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I want to speak for a moment about Bill 84. I speak on behalf of the folks in Welland-Thorold and, I am confident, people across this province. You know Bill 84, the so-called act to promote Fire Prevention and Public Safety. Well, I tell you, it neither promotes fire prevention nor does it promote public safety.

The first betrayal here is the title of the bill, and the fact is that the hundreds of people who have written to my constituency office and constituency offices across this province know it. The fact is that this is an attack on

the collective bargaining rights of professional firefighters across this province and it's an attack on the high standards that professional firefighters in Welland-Thorold and everywhere in Ontario have established in their eagerness to safeguard their communities and families within their communities. It's also a betrayal of the firefighters, to whom a commitment was made by Mike Harris and this government to consult with them before changes like this were even contemplated.

I tell you that in this caucus we will be debating Bill 84 in its entirety during the course of second reading. We will be calling, on behalf of our constituents, for full public hearings so that people in this province, especially professional firefighters, have an opportunity to express their disdain for this penultimate betrayal. This government should be ashamed of its attack on hardworking and highly skilled professional firefighters. This government isn't going to stand up for them; New Democrats will.

### J.J. ROBINETTE

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I rise today on behalf of the Attorney General to pay respect to the most distinguished barrister this province has ever known. We are saddened by the passing of J.J. Robinette, the dean of Canada's lawyers, at the age of 90.

Mr Robinette's career spanned over 60 years, during which time he dealt with everything from criminal murder trials to constitutional issues. His eloquence was well known by his colleagues, but it was the criminal cases that made him well known to the Canadian public. He saved 16 clients from the gallows and was a fierce advocate for the abolition of capital punishment.

Mr Robinette was called to the bar in 1929. Among his most famous clients was Evelyn Dick, whom he saved from hanging in 1947, when he won a new trial and gained her acquittal on the charge of murdering her husband. He was prosecutor in the espionage trials that followed the defection to Canada of Russian clerk Igor Gouzenko in the late 1940s. Mr Robinette served as lead counsel for the federal government and was successful in obtaining the right, before the Supreme Court of Canada, for the unilateral patriation of the Constitution.

Among honours bestowed upon Mr Robinette were the Companion of the Order of Canada and the Order of Ontario, as well as numerous honorary degrees from Canadian universities.

When Mr Robinette spoke to the Law Society of Upper Canada, life stopped so all could hear his words. He created his own style and eloquence.

Our thoughts today are with his wife, Lois, daughters Joan, Dale and Wendy, his six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.



## SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** Every day there are drivers in Ontario who break the law and put children's safety in jeopardy. Drivers who pass a school bus with its warning lights flashing have little fear of prosecution because the driver must be positively identified in addition to the vehicle. It is difficult for a bus driver who is trying to watch the children to identify both vehicle and driver.

The police in one municipality I have approached said this occurs 40 to 60 times a month. A bus company reported that this happens to their bus drivers at least twice a day. Despite the fact that vehicles are often identified, the police have their hands tied by a system that allows the drivers to go free.

To address this problem I have introduced Bill 78, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act. This private member's bill attempts to address the problem by providing deterrents to make motorists stop passing a school bus with its lights flashing. This bill would double existing fines and would also create a vehicle owner liability of between \$1,000 and \$2,000. This would come into effect if the driver could not be identified.

The aim of this bill is not to attack vehicle owners but to close a loophole which allows drivers to endanger the lives of children without fear of repercussion. I'm counting on all members of this Legislature to support Bill 78 when it is presented for second reading on November 28.

## TVONTARIO

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I'd like to direct my statement today to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. In the last month I've received many letters from natives, francophones and anglophones from Cochrane North who are extremely worried about the future of TVO and TFO, the only free TV stations for people who live in remote communities and rely on this vital network as their link to the rest of the province.

The government is pushing for the privatization of this great asset that belongs to all of us. For 26 years TVO has been providing high-quality education and violence-free television programming not only to the population of Ontario but in 107 countries worldwide. Furthermore, the Wawatay radio network and Wahsa distance education use TVOntario to distribute their signal to first nations in the northernmost reaches of our province, including, I might point out, a lot of the towns in my riding. These vital services would be jeopardized with the sale of TVO. And in your rush to sell off TVO, have you thought about the future of TFO, the only public or private voice for Ontario francophones?

I am urging this government to consult with the public and fully analyse the negative impact this privatization plan would have on all Ontarians, including people from the native and francophone communities, of whom I have a large number in my riding, in Hearst and all the way up the Hudson Bay and James Bay coast, who depend on TVO and TFO.

## 1340

## JOB CREATION

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** Since June 1995 Ontario has experienced solid private sector growth. Companies are expanding, new businesses are up and running, and about 127,000 new jobs have been created. Ontario is open for business, and today I would like to add another company to the rapidly expanding list of growing enterprises. The House of Cedar Group has acquired the former Areoquip building in Perth, Lanark county, to create Cedar 1 Inc.

This expansion will bring in a \$2-million investment and produce 80 new jobs, most of which will be available to people who reside in the area. Workers will be part of a dynamic production system that is mass marketing creative, do-it-yourself cedar products for the home. The Perth plant will produce gazebos you can set up in less than three hours and a sauna you can put together in 30 minutes.

This company will sell products worldwide from a county that has been progressive in its approach to global communications. In the same way we are selling Ontario to the world through Market Ontario, Lanark county has been using a World Wide Web site for some time now to attract investment from every possible country and region. I commend the county warden, the mayor, council —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Your time has expired.

## VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On the very same day that the Mike Harris government chose to use closure to push through legislation that will allow video slot machines in every bar, every restaurant and every neighbourhood in Ontario, another damning story about the deadly impact of video gambling appeared on television screens across Ontario. Karen Pinker of TVOntario reported that the Governor of Louisiana has advice for Mike Harris: Don't do it.

The state of Louisiana has now turned against video gaming because of the misery it has perpetrated upon the desperate, the poor and the vulnerable. Citing incidents involving suicides, political corruption and increased criminal activity, the people of Louisiana have said no to video gaming and give the same advice to the people of Ontario. C.B. Forgotson, a respected observer of video gaming in the United States, noted that the Harris government's claim that the legalization of video slot machines will help decrease illegal gaming in Ontario was ludicrous. Instead, he stated that the people of Ontario should expect to see a proliferation of illegal gambling and increased criminal activity.

I call upon Mike Harris to listen to the experience of Louisiana, to listen to the people of Ontario who worry that video slot machines will cause an increase in crime and to listen to the multitude of local governments across Ontario, including his very own in North Bay, who are saying no to video slot machines.



## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Like most of the members here, I spent constituency week, not only in my riding but in a number of communities across the province, talking about areas of interest. Being the labour critic for our party, certainly the biggest issue at this moment on the minds of working people and injured workers and those who represent those groups is the changes this government is planning to bring in with WCB.

We still haven't seen the legislation. We know from the leaked cabinet document that it's your intent to ram this through by December 31. People know that you're not just making small minor amendments. You're not even following only the amendments made by Cam Jackson. You're going beyond all of that. In fact, you're rewriting the entire Workers' Compensation Act, and your current plan is to ram that through this House by December 31.

I'm here to say to the members of the government that the people of Ontario and those who represent workers and injured workers are not going to accept this. We know it is possible that a government could think it's okay to ram legislation through. You've already done it with Bill 7. We saw what you tried to do with Bill 49. We had to hijack the Legislature to slow you down on Bill 26.

I want to tell you that pressure, fear and anger are building across this province and that you owe it not just for a few days but to hold full, province-wide public hearings with enough time to consider the depth and complexity of the draconian changes you're making.

## KIWANIS CLUB OF PETERBOROUGH

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** It is with pride that I rise in the House to honour and congratulate the Kiwanis Club of Peterborough for celebrating its 75th anniversary this last weekend.

The Kiwanis Club of Peterborough summarizes its activities and community involvement in one word: service — to the community, to the world, to itself.

The club began serving the local community shortly after its formation in November 1921 by building a dining hall for a summer day camp at Jackson Park which served needy children until 1939.

In the decades to follow, the club built a wading pool in both King Edward and Hamilton parks, assisted earthquake victims in Japan and sponsored the Sea Cadets corps and a special school for the mentally challenged. They participated in drug awareness programs and junior citizens' awards. They participated in Big Brothers and Big Sisters and, more recently, created breakfast clubs.

I wish to thank the Kiwanis Club of Peterborough for making our community a better place to live. Their hard work and dedication to improve the quality of life for many have not gone unnoticed. Congratulations on the 75th. We look forward to their continued success in building a better community for all.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we

have in the Speaker's gallery today His Worship Ugo Nori, mayor of Montorio al Vomano in the Abruzzi region of Italy. Welcome.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES

## PAROLE SYSTEM

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** My priority as the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services in this government is to promote the safety and security of Ontarians by taking strong and decisive actions to combat crime and reform the criminal justice system. One area where such action was urgently required was the system of granting parole to offenders serving time in our provincial jails. People told us repeatedly that parole requirements must be strengthened.

As a government we have moved quickly to reform parole in Ontario. To restore public confidence in parole decisions we have appointed people from local communities across the province who share our government's strong commitment to public safety. Some members have extensive experience in the criminal justice system, while others are heavily involved in their communities. Ontario parole board members are better trained, use a new risk-assessment tool and have more information available to them for making appropriate release decisions. As a result, fewer inmates were released on parole last year and the rate of serious reoffending by parolees was also significantly reduced.

During 1995-96 the new parole procedures resulted in a drop in the granting rate to 42.4% from 49.1% and 59% respectively in each of the two previous fiscal years. The grant rate is at its lowest level in the last 10 years. At the same time, the number of parolees charged with serious offences dropped from 61 in 1994-95 to 27 in 1995-96.

I'm pleased to report that Ontario's parole system has been tightened and strengthened over the past year, resulting in fewer parolee crimes and safer Ontario communities.

We have made all of these important changes to improve the parole system while reducing the cost of running the provincial parole board by 27%. That's a saving of \$1 million to Ontario taxpayers.

Ontarians can be reassured that parole release under this government is being granted with public safety as the highest priority. We promised this and we have taken effective action.

1350

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** At the end of the Solicitor General's remarks, he spoke about \$1 million in saving coming from the parole system because of the way it's being managed right now. I would make the point to the minister that it would be very important that his ministry retain that money, especially with the bill we passed last night where we're going to have a proliferation of video slot machines right across this province, in every bar and every restaurant. He knows it's going to be more difficult, as we saw last night on the TVOntario program Studio 2, to enforce the illegal grey machines



that he knows are out there with the introduction of the legal machines right across this province. You'd better fight, Solicitor General, and I'll support you in that fight, to retain that money in your department, because we need that policing and that protection.

What we've seen in this province basically is a wrecking-crew approach, a demolition derby approach to everything that governments have built up in the past here, and it doesn't stop at your department either. VLT introduction is just one area that we have a big concern with.

Another concern I hope you'd be listening to with the OPP is the Highway 407 construction. They have indicated they have some severe problems with the safety standards that were slackened when the previous government brought that contract forward. There are big concerns about that, and you'd better make sure you listen to the OPP, because as soon as we have some accidents there, and hopefully not some deaths, it's going to be right here, because you are not enforcing this and are not helping the OPP and listening to their advice, and that's very important.

I'm kind of surprised today that you didn't mention Ipperwash and your agreement, I hope, to have a public inquiry, because that issue is not lost yet. Ipperwash is not over with yet. In opposition we are going to pursue this with you and we again call for a public inquiry on that.

We still haven't seen the results of the investigations from the alleged beatings at Elgin-Middlesex that happened after the Bluewater riot. We ask you to push for those. We need to see those, and again we need to see what's happening with the handling of young offenders in the Ontario correctional system. Tomorrow, on the steps outside of here, there's a demonstration in memory of James Lonnee, a young offender who allegedly was murdered while he was in your custody. People are angry about that. We want to see that inquiry. We want to see that investigation. In fact, I think once all these investigations are in, it is time to have a total public inquiry on the young offenders system in Ontario. Minister, you are not doing the job that parents expect of you when their children are charged and sentenced to the system. They don't expect them back in a casket; they expect them back in the community. You've got to do that and that's your responsibility.

Thirty minutes ago I was talking to firefighters who are gathering here for a couple of days, and they're going to be talking to all of the opposition MPPs tomorrow. They're going to be coming at your door, and I know what you're going to have in front of you. You're going to have a list from the Solicitor General saying, "Oh, I met with the firefighter organizations; I consulted with them." Yes, there was an initial meet-and-greet and there were a couple of meetings with ADMs. In fact, in one of the meetings with the assistant deputy minister, he didn't even take a pen or paper in there to listen to their concerns.

The Premier broke a promise to firefighters and, Minister, boy, are they angry. They are angry and they're never going to forget. They're never going to forget you or this government for breaking that promise. Premier

Harris said he would never bring through any changes to the firefighters legislation without consultation, and that consultation has not happened.

You have slipped a poison pill into Bill 84, a poison pill that changes how labour relations are going to work in this province in regard to firefighters, and they're angry. You know the pride of the men and women who risk their lives every day for the people of Ontario. They've never gone on strike; they've never threatened to go on strike; they never would go on strike. Why you slapped them in the face with that part of the legislation, saying, "You should not be going on strike ever" — why don't you just go by their loyalty, by their dedication to the people of Ontario and the safety of the people of Ontario, and trust them, as we've always trusted in the past? They've never threatened any labour disruption.

Minister, you have a lot to account for in this ministry. We're going to be asking, once these investigations conclude, to have some major inquiries so we can get to the bottom of how you handle young offenders, how you manage the jail system and how the police got instructions to do certain things over the last year. We think you're in trouble over there and we'll be calling for accounts.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** The minister is going to need an enhanced parole system, because when they get through with putting lottery video terminals in every bar, every restaurant, every neighbourhood in Ontario, you're going to find real crime problems in this province.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** The Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services has been trying for some time to polish up his tarnished image as the protector of law and order in Ontario. He's been scrambling particularly since the opposition parties made such an issue out of the VLT issue. So he comes to us today with this announcement which takes very little analysis to show it as it is.

This announcement is particularly offensive because it assumes that a better and stronger parole system consists of a parole system where it is harder and harder for those in provincial prisons to get parole. That is the whole mistake of this particular government, because this government is dealing with people who have been incarcerated for two years or less under the jurisdiction of the province, and for the most part those are people whose crimes are considered to be relatively less serious than those for which people are incarcerated in federal penitentiaries.

This minister has always maintained, while he was in opposition and since, that what we need to look at is releasing fewer people on parole into the community and that will make us safer. But the problem is that the people who are in penitentiaries, particularly who are in provincial institutions, will be released and they will be released into our community when they cannot get parole without the transitional phase that was set up to help them to reassimilate into the community, to test whether or not those people have learned their lesson from their incarceration.

This minister says he thinks it's a good thing that more and more people are staying in prison to the end of their



sentence. He tells us that the fact that there are fewer charges for people on parole is something from which we should take comfort. The reality is that what happens while people are on parole and true recidivism are not related.

This minister does not tell us how many people leave directly from jail and reoffend within the first six months. He doesn't tell us that in our Ontario penitentiaries there is a program at the Ontario Correctional Institute that has a very high level of success in terms of recidivism that is based on community actions to try to help people re-assimilate into the community. He feeds into all the right-wing rhetoric about what is real about law and order.

He is trying to convince people that by taking this action he's making a difference to their safety. It's offensive because our greatest safety is making sure that those who have committed criminal acts have been caught, have been prosecuted, have been convicted and have been jailed, and learn from that experience and learn to re-assimilate into the community without reoffending. That is true safety. For this minister to stand up and say that because of these changed figures and the extended incarceration of prisoners, this makes us safer is simply nonsense.

What is more is that it's very offensive that he talks about \$1 million saved in the running of the parole board, because the reality is that each of those people who stays in jail for the rest of their sentence costs us millions of dollars. It is absolutely ridiculous for him to take pride in a situation which is increasing our costs at the front end in the correctional services and gives us less and less hope that those people, once incarcerated, when they leave prison are going to be able to re-assimilate as non-offenders into our society.

1400

This minister is presiding over a situation where police budgets are getting lower, where court delays are getting longer, where he is seeing women and children forced back into their homes because the services aren't there to protect them from violent people within those homes, from domestic abuse, and he tries to come here and tell us this is what is making us safer.

Finally, I'm absolutely amazed that this minister dares to talk about a more highly qualified parole board. The only qualification for at least one member of that parole board is having been the campaign manager for this minister. That's hardly a qualification.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I understand that earlier today the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation made an announcement revealing what I gather is supposed to be a new, major equal opportunity plank which I gather is a Web site. I wonder if I could move unanimous consent for the minister to make a statement in the House on that.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is there unanimous consent for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation to make a statement in the House? No.

ALFRED COWLING

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** Mr Speaker, I rise to seek unanimous consent of this House to offer a

few words of condolence on the passing of a former member of this House.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr Shea:** It is with considerable regret that I rise to inform the House of the passing of Mr Alfred Cowling, who died yesterday morning at St Joseph's Health Centre in his 86th year. Mr Cowling was a former alderman and controller of the city of Toronto, and a member of this Parliament for 16 years representing the riding of High Park. He was the husband of Betty, 54 years married, and leaves a son, Alf Jr, and his wife, Beverley, and a granddaughter, Natalie. He was born and educated in Toronto and his life was committed to community.

Those are very barebones records of a man's life, but in fact there was considerably more in terms of his service to community and his dedication to his community. His life indeed was one of commitment and his life enriched each and every one of us.

His life spanned service to the community in the Royal Canadian Air Force, serving in the Second World War. He was a director of the Canadian National Exhibition. He was president of and very active in the Runnymede Lions Club, a director of the High Park YMCA and a member of the Empire Club and the Albany Club.

Indeed, as a sportsman, there may be some in this chamber old of history or long in tooth who may well remember his activity with the Balmy Beach football team when it won the Grey Cup, and a number of other championship teams he served on in hockey, baseball and lacrosse.

He was a very active member in his parish of St Paul's Anglican Church Runnymede. In fact, that's where he was married to his wife Betty 54 years ago.

There is a sidebar to that that is interesting too because he was very active in music, very active in barbershop quartets. There may be some here who will remember the name Rudy Vallee, there may be some who will remember the name Percy Faith, but as part of a barbershop team, he often acted as backup to those names as well as many others. So his life was quite eclectic.

In terms of his political career, as I mentioned, he was an alderman and a controller for the city of Toronto for the years 1949, 1950 and 1951. Then, in 1951 he was elected to this House, and he served until 1967 through a period of tremendous change. One of the areas of change that he is best remembered for, of course, serving under Premiers Frost and Robarts, was the development of Metropolitan Toronto. Indeed, at the time Metro Toronto was formed it consisted of 13 municipalities, and he saw that evolve and change as it went through a number of metamorphoses. He continued as chairman of the municipal advisory committee that oversaw the development and the continuing unfolding of Metro Toronto.

He was a member of the committee involved with air pollution and smoke control that in fact became the forerunner of the Ministry of the Environment. There are a number of accomplishments that he can claim in that capacity.

But above all else in his political life he was a constituency person, and that is something each and every one of us in this chamber today can reflect upon and compli-



ment him for and hope that each and every one of us remembers his roots as we try to remember ours in what we are sent here to do, that is, to represent the people of our ridings.

It was Dr Morton Shulman who eased Alf Cowling back into public life. That happened in 1967. His wife, Betty, was remarking to me today that she worried about him, about how he would make the adjustment back to non-political activity. In fact, showing the kind of optimism he was famous for, he said, "Look, tomorrow will be just fine and we'll get on to living life the way we should." Indeed, he continued as a member of the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and as a member of the Pension Commission of Ontario. He got even more active with the Lions Club and very active in his parish church of St Paul's, Runnymede.

Above all else, he was seen more and more walking the streets, as he had always wanted to do, with his wife, Betty, spending time on the main street we know as Bloor West Village. That leads me to my final point: Always in the company of his bride, his wife of 54 years, they were has seen on the streets of Bloor West Village, caring and sharing their life and their experiences with those around them.

Those facts are clear about where he been and what he has done, but I hope he will be remembered by those who were touched by him most particularly as being a person of honour and duty and dedication, one who lived for and in the community, a person who was loving and who was kind and who was thoughtful and warm and who was genuine, politically wise, thoughtful, sometimes a little mischievous, certainly very honourable and always very unselfish.

My first meeting with Alf Cowling goes back over 40 years ago as I sat in the assembly hall at Humberstone Collegiate. There was a dapper, rather short gentleman who stood on the stage as a member of the provincial Parliament, wearing a bow tie, trying to help us understand what politics was all about, and it wasn't easy to do. But I recall he impressed me with his honesty, with his integrity that came forth from that stage, and I've always remembered that. Indeed, as I spoke to his wife again this morning, she told me they are receiving a number of phone calls from young people and old people alike who are calling her to remind her of the impact Alf has had upon their life. The way he impressed them and encouraged them or supported them throughout circumstances in their lives has been remarkable. I think that's a tribute we would all hope might be paid to each and every one of us when our time comes to leave this life.

He died yesterday morning a very tough death — he died of lung cancer — but through it all he was courageous and he was very optimistic. Even at the end he would remove his oxygen mask to thank his nurses for some gentle ministry they exercised for him. He was a gentleman, he was courteous, he was caring for others, and he was appreciative of life to the very end. When the end came at St Joseph's, it came peacefully. God visited Alf softly and, with great love, took him home. The one happy part of his death was that Betty and Alf Jr had time to say their goodbyes and to reaffirm their love for one another and to reaffirm their faith.

To Betty and Alf Jr and Beverley and Natalie we extend our condolences. It is with considerable sadness that this House marks his passing and it is with considerable appreciation that it marks his contribution to the people of Ontario. He will be missed, but he will also be lovingly remembered and honoured.

1410

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** On behalf of our caucus, I'd also like to pay tribute to the memory of Alfred Cowling. It seems that Mr Cowling very clearly was a Renaissance man. He not only loved music, but he was also very involved in athletics. In fact, as the member for High Park-Swansea mentioned, he was even a member of the Toronto Balmy Beach Grey Cup championship team.

As you know, he dedicated his life to the community and served as an elected official in the city of Toronto and here in this Legislature. One of the things I would like to mark is that he seemed to be a pioneer, that he took a very early interest in the environmental concerns of his constituents and really helped to establish the Department of the Environment, so I think Mr Cowling was a man ahead of his time in many ways. Also he was always willing to give. He served in the RCAF during the Second World War and he continued to be involved in his local hospital in his local community, all the way through, beyond politics.

Certainly on behalf of my caucus I would like to pay tribute to a true Renaissance man, Mr Alfred Cowling.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus to also extend to the Cowling family our condolences on the passing of Alfred Cowling and to join in the acknowledgement of his great contribution to the province of Ontario. I won't reiterate the points that have been made, particularly by the member for High Park-Swansea, in outlining the distinguished career Mr Cowling followed, not just as a member of this Legislature for 16 years but prior to that as a city councillor and indeed following his leaving this place in a number of activities. The fact that this gentleman was, above all, considered to be someone who was also active in his own community is noteworthy above and beyond any other particular activities and involvement he had.

I can pass on a note that comes to me from a former colleague of mine who unlike me knew Mr Cowling, the words of Elaine Ziemba, who remembers Mr Cowling as a decent human being who worked hard for his constituency, someone who was very friendly, well known in his community, made himself available to his constituents. The member for High Park-Swansea has already mentioned that. If you will allow, Mr Speaker, on a slightly more partisan line, he was someone, it seems to me, who also understood truly the need to serve his community in the fullest of ways and even on occasion in a non-partisan way, because I understand that on at least one occasion he had the temerity to support Ed Ziemba in one of the elections and I think this probably seems fitting of a man who certainly strikes me as having been very active in his own community and very much having taken the interest of his community at heart.

I join my colleagues in expressing on behalf of the New Democrats our condolences to the family and our thanks for his contribution.



**The Speaker:** I will be certain to pass on the comments from the members for High Park-Swansea, Oakwood and Dovercourt to the family.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ECONOMIC STATEMENT

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** My question today is for the Minister of Finance. I would like to ask about the considerations going into the fiscal economic statement being released next week. Minister, particularly we want to know about the tradeoff you're prepared to make between tax cuts and cuts to kids. Here in the gallery is Linda Sinclair who would like to talk to you about the cuts to education at the Nottawa public school where half of the students are in portables, thanks to the cuts you've made in capital budgets. What we want to know is, one year later after your last economic statement, are you prepared to put in specific provisions to make sure that children aren't harmed? Are you prepared to recognize that in your upcoming economic statement?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** There is no correlation between tax cuts and children other than at the end of the day the children of this province will have a future, they will have employment and they will have opportunity, thanks to more jobs being created in the province.

**Mr Kennedy:** That's an appalling answer. It's an appalling answer from the minister in charge of seeing that there's some balance in this province. Perhaps it would have been a better answer if this minister had been at the presentation of Campaign 2000, which now crowns Ontario as the heartland of poverty in this province, with more poor children than any other part of the country.

Minister, how do you explain that report that comes out today that says the depth of poverty is worse for children in this province since you've enacted your cuts to finance a tax cut? It is up to you to show to the people of this province where you're making your decisions from. What are you putting ahead of poor children who don't have enough to eat, who are finding it more difficult? Will you, in this upcoming economic statement, find some room for them?

**Hon Mr Eves:** This government has done all kinds of things that assist children. If he cares to look at the May 7 budget of last year he will see all kinds of things we have done for young people in Ontario, for the education system in the province, and the post-secondary education system in the province, despite the fact —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Minister of Finance?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I think we would all agree that in terms of education more money should be spent in the classroom educating our young people and less on administration. Mr Sweeney, a previous Liberal cabinet minister, indicates that. The previous government obviously thought that; they commissioned Mr Sweeney to do his report. Quite frankly, that is correct: There should be more money being spent in the classroom helping young

people, helping prepare them for the future, putting the money into their education, not into administration.

**Mr Kennedy:** What the people of Ontario want from the Minister of Finance, whose decisions are affecting thousands of people in this province, is more time spent looking into the eyes of parents like Mrs Sinclair, like the people in Guelph who have had to sit on the floors of their classrooms, like the people in food bank lineups who are there only because of this government. You can't blame it on former Liberal governments, you can't blame it on other people.

Minister, I want to ask you to make sure that you spend more time in the next week before your financial statement talking to people who are affected, who have children, than the bank presidents who are getting a \$150,000 tax cut realized from your economic statement.

We don't believe it's your intention to have more kids go hungry. What we want you to do, though, is to prove that once you know that's happened, you are prepared to do something about it. It's your chance to do that kind of thing, to show this province where you're coming from. Next week in your economic statement will you undertake to do so, to protect children in this province from the cutbacks that you've provided them so far?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The honourable member will have to wait, as everybody will, of course, for when the statement comes out to see what it says. I can assure you that this government's intention has always been and will always be to provide a future and opportunity for the young people in this province.

As the honourable member goes around the province having various debates with his colleagues about the Liberal leadership, I can assure you that a lot of your Liberal colleagues agree with the direction this government's taking. "We must invest more of our education dollars in classroom instruction and fewer on administration" — Dwight Duncan. "It means putting more moneys into classrooms, more teachers into classrooms and improving our ratio for our kids. We can't back away from the prospects of amalgamation. As Liberals, we're fiscally responsible. We've got to look at that" — Dalton McGuinty.

You might want to take some advice from some of your own colleagues over there who are running for the Liberal leadership, who agree that the money should be spent in the classroom, less money —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister of Finance? New question.

1420

### HIGHWAY SAFETY

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** A new question, this time for the Minister of Transportation, although we must acknowledge that it's never been clear why we're on this side of the House, when the Minister of Finance declares war on the poor instead of war on poverty.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Members, come to order, please.

**Mr Kennedy:** I'll continue with my question. In the same vein, we're hoping now for a different quality of



answer from the Minister of Transportation. Much of this province is starting to wake up to this Comic Book Revolution and they want to know, Minister, whether you're prepared to compromise their future for the sake of this tax cut.

My question today is with particular reference to Highway 407, to the advice your ministry received in July 1995. In July 1995 the police told you about the absence of guardrails, about no guardrails being put in, about not having proper barriers around the abutments around bridges and lights. You belittled that advice, you put down what the police, the front-line people responsible for enforcing safety on our highways, said. Will you now listen to the police? Will you take measures to take into account their advice on Highway 407?

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Al, say one word. Save me.

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I would like to say to the honourable member that highway safety is and always has been a priority with MTO. There aren't too many things about policy that I agree on with the NDP, but one thing I do want to say is that Bob Rae and Gilles Pouliot would not compromise safety for the sake of saving \$1 million.

*Laughter.*

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I further want to say it's a shame about the pessimism and the fearmongering of certain members of the opposition in the Liberal Party who are taking an attitude and an approach that is totally irresponsible. The most important —

**The Speaker:** I say to the minister, you'll get another chance.

**Mr Kennedy:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. A very appropriate intervention, if I may say so.

Minister, we are not heartened to know that this government is depending on the NDP for their engineering. We look at what was the first item of business for this minister: advice from the police, which he continues to make fun of, the OPP, who told him there were serious safety concerns. In the face of that, from July 1995 till now it seems this minister has ignored that advice and has charged ahead as a big cheerleader for Highway 407.

Minister, this is not funny. You'll be cutting a ribbon in a few weeks at that highway, and they're going to be coming to you the first time there's an accident there, the first time there's some serious loss of limb or life. We need from you recognition that the concerns of the OPP and of the Auditor General — Mr Minister, could you please comment on why the Auditor General is able to tell us that standards have been compromised? Will you respond to the concerns of the Auditor General and of the OPP and enact some safety provisions on that highway?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I have read the auditor's report. In no way does the auditor say that safety was compromised. One of the issues we're talking about here, for instance: As far as the median is concerned, the medians in most highways throughout the province are less than 50 feet. The median on Highway 407 is 13 metres wider than any other highway in the province, so there are no compromises to safety.

As far as Highway 407 or any particular highway anywhere in the world is concerned, there are no safe-

guards to protect against drunk or aggressive drivers. But Highway 407 is a safe and very viable highway which will help the future of this province.

**Mr Kennedy:** There ought to be safeguards against a minister who won't do his job and a government that puts a tax cut ahead of highway safety.

This government and this minister have no choice: They must enact an independent safety audit of this highway. You cannot allow that highway, and millions of people to traverse it, without putting in place some confidence for the people there. Everyone knows now when they're travelling down that highway without a median down the middle, without the confidence of the police who are supposed to be protecting them that that's a safe highway, it's not possible for it to be viable.

Minister, please tell us clearly that you will go ahead and make sure there is a special safety audit done, a reasonable thing required by you, independent of the government, so that people can have the assurance that you're fulfilling your responsibilities.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** We will not compromise safety. If there are any safety issues that have to be addressed, we will not open Highway 407. I know there are no standard safety features on the highway, but I'm even willing to have an independent report developed just to make sure this highway is safe, which I know it is. I am convinced it is safe.

#### ATTORNEY GENERAL'S COMMENTS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is once again for the Attorney General. Last Thursday, November 7, the Attorney General said the Metro Toronto police were called in to investigate an incident that took place at the family support office in Downsview. But the Attorney General didn't stop there. He went on to make some very inappropriate remarks that have been recorded in Hansard. Yesterday he didn't seem to know anything about those comments. I hope he remembers them today, because he said, and this is a quote of the Attorney General, "I said there was a break-in" and "I said it was because there was a break-in."

It was you, not a judge, not the police, who declared that there had been a break-in, knowing that the alleged break-in was the subject of a police investigation. Why did the Attorney General make these very inappropriate statements?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Quite simply, there was an incident at the family support plan office in Downsview. As a result of that incident, the assistant deputy minister responsible for the family support plan called the police to investigate.

**Mr Hampton:** The question isn't about the fact that the police might be investigating; the question is about the totally inappropriate comments of this Attorney General. He has to learn that if he wants to be called the Attorney General of the province, he has to take responsibility for his inappropriate, reckless, careless comments that cost the justice system in this province its credibility.

You declared, not a judge, not the police, "...there was a break-in," you, the Attorney General, who is supposed to be neutral at all times, who is supposed to avoid those



kinds of comments at all times. Can you tell us, on what legal basis, on what evidence of the police did you conclude there was a break-in?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I've explained my comments and that explanation stands.

1430

**Mr Hampton:** It's clear what this Attorney General did. He pre-empted a police investigation. He believes he has the authority, as the Attorney General, to pre-empt a police investigation.

I want to read from John Edwards, author of *The Law Officers of the Crown*, perhaps the definitive statement on the role of attorneys general. He says on page 231, note 21, "Matters awaiting or under adjudication in all courts exercising a criminal jurisdiction and in courts martial should not be referred to in any motion or debate...including a supplementary question." Yet we have an Attorney General who comes in here and totally pre-empts a police investigation and forms a legal conclusion before the police have had an attempt to investigate, before a judge has even considered the matter.

Attorney General, in order to restore your own credibility and to restore the credibility of the legal system in this province, are you prepared to resign, as you should do?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Again, I've explained my comments and that explanation stands.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question, leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** This is unfortunate because I think it indicates how much the standards of this government have fallen.

**The Speaker:** I need a question to —

#### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My next question is to the Minister of Health. We'll try to see if the Minister of Health will respond. Today hundreds of nurses from across Ontario protested in front of the Legislature. They are deeply concerned about your cuts to the health care system in this province. You have cut \$1.3 billion from hospital budgets across the province. Hospitals have been forced to cut health services. This year because of your budget cuts, patients are suffering, nurses are being laid off. You have created a crisis in patient care. If it is not to finance your phoney tax scheme, why did you take that money from hospitals this year? Why are you putting health care in a crisis in this province?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** I'm very much aware that one of the unions representing nurses was out front today, the Ontario Nurses' Association. They're the same group —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** They're a very responsible group.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Someone from across the way says they're a very responsible group. I think they have been too. I think what the nurses' association has been saying in terms of integrated delivery systems, in terms of the waste and duplication and the money that's wasted in the system — I guess where I'm confused is that we've had

this question many times in the House, where I've read out ONA's vision of health care and the government's vision of health care and I've compared sentence to sentence. We have the same vision.

We're working as hard as possible. Nurses are represented on almost everything that's done at the Ministry of Health. All the reinvestments we've done to date are for jobs for nurses and new front-line providers. We're trying to cut the administration, the duplication and the waste, and we're very sincerely trying to do that building on what's been done by previous governments, trying to reform the system the way nurses want the system reformed. I'm going to pledge to redouble my efforts to communicate to nurses better, because we all are pulling —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister.

**Mr Hampton:** The nurses tell quite a different story from the Minister of Health. They want health care change. They see this minister as being all about health care cuts. For example, they recognize that the health care system is suffering in this province as a result of your cuts. You don't recognize that.

They've even suggested some concrete solutions for you. They say to you that you cannot go about shortening hospital stays, cutting back on hospital services, without first making a commitment to an integrated system of health care, including adequate community supports. You're not doing that. Even Mr Duncan Sinclair, who met with them, acknowledges that you are not providing the community-based services that are necessary if hospitals are going to be forced to be closed. You know what? He even said that before the estimates committee. So Mr Duncan Sinclair agrees with the nurses. He agrees you can't make these cuts without putting the alternative services in place.

When are you going to meet with these nurses and when are you going to listen to the —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I'll meet with ONA at any time. I've made that clear. I apologized. The last meeting, members should know, was booked just about three weeks ago. It was unfortunately booked at 2 o'clock. The JPNC, which is the joint ministry and nursing committee that I was supposed to go to, was booked during question period. We were already receiving criticism that week from your party about not attending question period, so I had to be here and not with the nurses, and I fully explained that.

What did the nurses say about waste and money in the system?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** We phoned ONA on October 31 and were told that the next available time they had to meet would be in January 1997.

Let's quote from what the nurses have to actually say about funding in the system in their recent letter to the Premier. "While the evidence suggests that there is more than enough money in the system, indeed up to 30% of expenditures is on waste, duplication, inappropriate care, unnecessary bureaucracy." It goes on to make suggestions, as you've said, in how we improve the system. We



are working on all of those suggestions and more. Nurses are part of the system. They sit on the primary care steering committee. In all the new reforms in health care, nurses are represented, and I think we're trying to go in the same direction. I want to work —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

**Mr Hampton:** Once again the nurses tell quite a different story from the minister, and I know that most people in Ontario believe the nurses. The nurses' association has done the research. They've got the information for you and they want to know why they've been trying to meet with you since the summer to talk with you about the research they've done and you've refused to meet.

For example, they want to point out to you that if you continue the cuts you've got in place, 15,000 registered nurses' jobs will disappear in this province; 13 million hours of nursing care will be lost through your cuts. They also want to tell you that losing 13 million hours of nursing care will mean that morbidity rates will go up by between 200% and 400%, as happened in the United States when nursing budgets were cut by that amount.

Minister, the nurses have a wealth of information that they want to share with you about how damaging your cuts are, about how losing all of these nurses is going to hurt the health care system. Will you give a commitment today that you are going to meet forthwith with the nurses? They were available to meet with us. They asked —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister of Health.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I reiterate that commitment. The honourable member didn't think it up. We've phoned ONA many times over the last few months. I've got stacks of letters here of all the correspondence between Jane Cornelius, the president of the union, and myself, and we're trying to meet. I fully read all of their papers, personally, on their integrated delivery system. I've responded to that. Their language is part of the language of this government's Ministry of Health business plan.

They put out a poster today, and I couldn't provide a better checklist of what the government is doing in health care than the one provided by ONA. It talks about, "Create integrated delivery systems." We're doing that. It says, "Increase focus on illness prevention and health promotion." We're doing that with pneumococcal vaccine, getting rid of hepatitis B and measles for the first time in the history of the province, getting rid of red measles, putting millions of dollars into prevention. "Cut waste and duplication." That's what we're doing with the Health Services Restructuring Commission. "Expand the role of registered nurse." We're soon going to introduce the registered nurse practitioner legislation. We're moving on everything the nurses are asking us to move on.

1440

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. You know that today we have several parents in the galleries who are here to listen to the debate this afternoon and to hear some of your responses to concerns they have, because they have some dire concerns related to what's happening to their youngsters and the students in their schools.

The Minister of Finance made the comment that some of our leadership candidates were supporting the idea of finding administrative money in the school system. The one difference was that the Liberal Party said that that money would not disappear and go out to fund a tax break, that that money would stay and be redistributed to fund early childhood education and help the teacher in the classroom. That's the big difference.

Minister, what do you have to say to these parents who are saying that their children, the students in the schools from which they come, are suffering quality-wise because of your cuts?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I want to thank the member for Ottawa Centre for the question. I know that several of the parents who are here today — and I've had a chance to meet with some of those parents in the past — are very concerned about the building of capital projects, the building of schools across the province. I can assure the member that I have been informed of some of these projects. My colleague from Simcoe West, who sits in front of me, has told me about the situation around the Nottawa public school and the concern of parents in that area.

We've had a look at the long litany of promises made by previous governments to make capital investments, to build schools in the province. I'm sure the member opposite knows that, over the 10 years of the last two governments, the number of portables in our school system in the province grew by some 8,000 portables. Let me be clear again today, as I have been in the past, that we believe the system of making promises you can't keep has got to end and that we have to have a better capital program for our schools in the province.

**Mr Patten:** Minister, if you acknowledge the difficulties in education, what is the solution? Is it to cut or is it to freeze capital, which is what you've done, both of which affect directly the classroom?

I know you know that there is a problem with capital because I know that in your riding you're getting tremendous pressure, and so is the Minister of Health in his riding, because parents are very upset. Will you at least acknowledge that there is a problem, that there will be no further cuts and that you will slow down the reform? It's not just capital. We have lost art teachers, music teachers, phys-ed teachers, counsellors, librarians — throughout. Are you not aware of that?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Again I thank the member for Ottawa Centre. I want to reassure him of this: This government will make sure that schools are built in this province. What we won't do is what the Liberal Party did in 1989, which was to make I think \$1.1 billion in promises for capital projects and to make no reserves for cash to fulfil those promises. We will not do that.

What's the problem? What's the challenge? We must end duplication. We must make clear the accountabilities in our system. We must lower the cost of administration. We must make sure that the benefit of the dollars we spend on education in this province is received by our students and our young people. That's the commitment of this government, that's the track we're on, and that is what we will fulfil on.



## SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a question for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Yesterday the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses released a chilling account of what is happening to women and their children as a direct result of your cuts. Some have no choice but to return to their abusive partners.

In response to a question from the member for Oriole you said: "We take the issue of violence against women quite seriously, and that is one reason we have the supports and the funding and the programs in place so that these women are not put in that position to have to make that choice."

Women do have to make that choice, and they were here yesterday to tell you. Did you even bother to look at their research or do you think that the women who came down here yesterday were lying?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I reject the honourable member's attempt to somehow call into question this government's credibility on this issue. We do believe that women who are in abusive situations —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** We just want information, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** That's what I'm trying to get for you here. Minister?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Our commitment to trying to make sure that there are supports for these women is evidenced by the \$60 million we continue to spend for the 97 shelters, for the 100 counselling services, the Victims' Bill of Rights, the victim/witness assistance program, the \$11 million we're spending on capital. I could go on, and I'm sure I'll get an opportunity as she asks the supplementary, but this is a very important issue and I take it very seriously, as does the rest of my government.

**Ms Churley:** Minister, for the sake of a tax cut that's mainly going to benefit the rich, you are literally putting women's lives at risk. Why don't you take some responsibility? Nobody else over there will. Your government has already cut all the counselling and support programs for second-stage housing, cut the male batterers' program and crisis line funding. But it's not just these cuts to shelters. It's the cuts to social assistance, to legal aid, to children's aid societies, housing subsidies, child care, education and training and on and on. These are the supports these women need to get their lives back.

Nobody from your government is standing up for these women and children. Minister, will you? Will you today stand in your place and speak up for these women and children, guarantee that in the next budget at least the \$9 million you have taken out will be reinstated? Will you make at least that commitment today?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The biggest threat to the women in this province and the men in this province and the children in this province is the debt this government inherited from those across. That is the biggest threat. It is —

*Interjections.*

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** There are women whose lives are in danger and you stand up

and — I dare you to stand up in front of those women and say that.

**The Speaker:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine, come to order, please.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** How could you say such a thing?

**The Speaker:** The member for Oriole, order. New question.

1450

## ENVIRONMENTAL WEB SITE

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. I understand that a new and innovative joint venture which provides one-window access to environmental information via the Internet has just been opened. Could you explain the future details and workings of this wonderful innovation?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** Last week the Honourable John Manley, the Minister of Industry, and I announced the creation of the virtual office as a joint venture. This service provides around-the-clock access to a diverse range of information to more than 4,500 environmental companies in our province.

The virtual office allows environmental industry companies to quickly locate information and obtain advice on such topics as research, development, domestic and international markets, investment, financing and human resources. The virtual office also features direct e-mail access to 32 professionals from public and private agencies who are ready to provide assistance. It is a tool which will help the environmental business in our province to thrive and move forward in the next century.

**Mr O'Toole:** Will the virtual office be available to assist small business startup ventures which are currently trying to establish in the environmental field?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** This is particularly of interest to small companies because small companies don't have the kind of resources that large companies do. I hope members opposite would be sensitive to small companies that need timely information in order to compete in the market. This virtual office will provide those companies with the kind of access that their large competitors might have.

I would encourage all members of the Legislature to let the environmental companies in their particular constituencies know about the virtual office and the advantages it can have for their companies.

## STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. Recently I visited two schools. One has a student population which has 58 identified exceptional students in it and the other has 89 identified students within the student population. In one grade 4 and 5 classroom there are 38 students, with eight students being identified, ranging from severe behavioural to physical to communication exceptionalities. In another grade 7 and 8 class there are 38 students, and that class has 10 identified exceptionalities in it. These identified exceptionalities are severe, ranging from physical to



behavioural to intellectual exceptionalities. Both situations are unbelievably and fundamentally wrong for education.

My question to you is, as the Minister of Education, would you visit these two classrooms with me within the next three weeks?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I know the member opposite will understand that it's difficult to make a promise in this chamber as to time allocation in the next three weeks, but I can assure the member of this: I have visited a number of schools and talked with the parents of a number of exceptional students and I understand the needs of our very special needs young people in Ontario. I know it's important that those needs be addressed, and I know the parents and the educators who work daily with these exceptional needs people, these young people, know we need to make some fundamental changes in our funding system in Ontario and in the way education is delivered to those young people. I want to assure the member opposite that this government will make those changes for those young people.

**Mr Bartolucci:** The principal, the teachers, the students and the parents at those two schools are going to be disappointed that the Minister of Education will not visit those schools.

Minister, a local high school in Sudbury has been circulating a letter. In part, it says:

"Ladies and gentlemen:

"Current fiscal restraints force us to reach out into our community for support. Funds are needed to add to computer equipment, to purchase supplies, as well as for busing of co-op education students and extracurricular programs. Your financial support is needed to support our programs. In lieu of money, a donation of supplies or equipment would be appreciated."

My question to the minister is simple. Is that your vision of funding for the classroom and what would you say to the people of that particular high school who are circulating that letter?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Let me say that I'm disappointed in the tone and the quality of the question from the member opposite.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I did not —

*Interjections.*

**Interjection:** I want to hear him.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Well, I do too. It's a lot easier to hear if you're not yelling at him.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Again, I am disappointed at the tone of that question. First of all, I did not say that I would not visit those institutions. I told you I could not make that promise standing here in the chamber today, and I would expect you would understand that as a function of understanding how our mutual jobs work and our scheduling problems.

But I can tell him, and I told the member opposite, that I have visited with special needs kids across the province. I happen to think the future of our young people in this province, and particularly meeting the needs of those special needs young people, is too important for partisan politics and I'm disappointed that the member opposite would engage in those on this very important question.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I have a question for the Minister of Citizenship —

**Mr Bartolucci:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The last thing you or I will tolerate is being disciplined by this —

**The Speaker:** That's not a point of order. The member for Dovercourt.

## SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** My question is to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. When your government killed the Employment Equity Commission, you promised to put some of that money, the \$9.3 million you cut from that commission, into the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Instead, not only did you not put any of those funds into the commission, but you in fact cut a further \$700,000 from the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Then today we see your big announcement of what is the main plank of your equal opportunity plan, namely, the Web site and brochure, that will do nothing to address the proven systemic discrimination and underrepresentation of women, racial minorities, people with disabilities and aboriginal peoples in most areas of employment.

Minister, my question to you is simply this: How are this spiffy Web site and brochure going to do anything to restore the 6% cuts your government has made to the Human Rights Commission and particularly how will they make your government keep your promise to increase funding to that important agency?

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** I thank the member opposite for the question because it gives me an opportunity to explain the Web site announcement and launching that was done today.

I want to assure the member opposite that this Web site has been developed in conjunction with the private sector. It's been based on partnership. It's been based on cooperation. It's not been based on coercion. It brings together those who have experience with equal opportunity and it reaffirms this government's commitment to equal opportunity as an economic benefit for all employers in this province.

**Mr Silipo:** We continue to see the complete arrogance —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** It's becoming very difficult with you sitting there screaming. I can't hear the questions or the answers.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** She doesn't have an answer.

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton East, I don't want to engage in debate. I'm just asking you to come to order.

**Mr Silipo:** We continue to see the complete arrogance that this minister and unfortunately other ministers are showing. I asked earlier for her to make a statement on this issue and she refused. Now I ask her a question about the cuts in funding to the Human Rights Commission and she makes her announcement on the Web site.

1500

Let me ask you about another aspect of your policy that people are waiting to see some action on, because your list of broken promises doesn't end with your cuts to funding for the Human Rights Commission. Yesterday, you may know, there were present here people from the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee. They were here and had some questions for you; unfortunately, you weren't here to deal with those questions, and they certainly were not going to appear at your fake announcement, Minister. But had they come, one of the questions they would have asked you was this: When will the government take meaningful action to keep your election promise to enact an Ontarians with Disabilities Act?

**Hon Ms Mushinski:** In response to the honourable member's question, first of all I want to assure him that the Canadian Abilities Foundation was actively involved in compiling the disabilities section of the Web site. Indeed, that involved over 700 questionnaires with disability groups in Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I say to the members of the third party, I can't hear the response.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** It wasn't worth it anyway.

**The Speaker:** Member from Cochrane, I think we'll all have to determine ourselves whether it was a worthy response. If you'd allow me to hear it, we could all make that decision.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** We want your opinion, okay?

**Mr Bisson:** When are you going to give your ruling?

**The Speaker:** You can't heckle the Speaker either.

**Hon Ms Mushinski:** With respect to an act for Ontarians with disabilities, I can assure the honourable member that this government has committed to passing such an act within the first term of this government and within the financial goalposts of this government. I am working and consulting with the disabled community to ensure that we develop the appropriate framework that is meaningful for the disabled.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. As you know, this week the Ontario Federation of Agriculture is holding its convention in Mississauga. You also are aware, because you were involved, that yesterday the Premier introduced Market Ontario, a program to tell the world that Ontario is a great place to live, work, visit, invest and do business.

You know that our agrifood industry will want to capitalize on the opportunities created. But to do so, they must continue to be world-class and competitive. Will you tell the Legislature what your ministry is doing to help Ontario's farmers increase their competitiveness?

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I want to thank the honourable member for Chatham-Kent for that question. It is very important, because our food producers of Ontario are

some of the main links in making this great province greater, as we are exporting some \$5 million-plus annually.

I met with the federation of agriculture yesterday and met a large number of the food producers from across the province. I also participated in the Market Ontario kickoff from Ottawa. That is bringing forth to the world the fact that Ontario does produce a quantity of products that the world needs and is demanding. And yes, our extension people in the ministry, our University of Guelph and our three agricultural colleges, are working hard towards keeping us on the leading edge. Agriculture is very much in the forefront and will remain the main engine of the economy in Ontario.

**Mr Carroll:** Can you tell us a little bit more about your program, how it will help the overall industry and how farmers who wish to participate can get involved and get more information?

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** The Grow Ontario program is \$15 million of new money, to the member for Chatham-Kent and to the people on the other side, who don't like the good news. There is a \$20-million sales tax rebate on capital improvements, also new money — \$35 million of new money. Indeed our ag offices, our ag reps and our extension people are available to provide information. The ministry head office is available to provide information to those farmers who require it. I am proud of our food producers in Ontario.

#### HIGHWAY SAFETY

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. As you know, front-line OPP officers have had the courage to stand up to your bullying. They've said that Highway 407 has been built with virtually no guardrails separating eastbound and westbound traffic. They've said the length of entry and exit ramps has been shortened to save on pavement costs. They've said light standards and bridge abutments have been installed, in most cases, without protection. Minister, why do you dismiss their concerns? Why do you try to bully them and belittle them? Why don't you sit down and listen to their concerns about safety on 407?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** The concerns expressed by individual OPP officers do not reflect the opinion of the OPP. The OPP's role is to enforce the speed limits and the rules of the road, not design highways.

**Mr Colle:** This is the problem. These front-line officers go to the accident scene and reconstruct the accident. They make recommendations to coroners' juries, as they did on Highway 403. They don't just go there after the fact. All they're asking is that the minister listen to them. They have some very important advice about safety. Why do you keep bullying them and refuse to listen to them? They're saying, "Minister, give us a voice." Why are you ignoring the front-line officers who also have a stake and expertise in safety?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** If there are any legitimate safety concerns, they will be addressed. We will not compromise safety prior to opening the highway.



## FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a question for the Attorney General regarding the crisis at the family support plan. In August of this year you laid off 290 staff and you closed the regional offices —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. The members for Oakwood, Scarborough-Agincourt and Kingston and The Islands, please come to order. It's a new question, from the third party.

**Ms Martel:** To the Attorney General regarding the crisis at the family support plan: In August you laid off 290 staff and you closed the regional offices of the family support plan, and since then women and children who used to receive support payments on a regular basis are now not. Thousands of families across this province are not able to pay their rent; they are having their heat, their hydro, their phone service cut off; they are going to food banks for food because they cannot afford to buy their own.

Minister, I want to raise the case with you today of Diane, who used to receive \$1,000 a month on a regular basis —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Oakwood, I asked you to come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Oakwood, I've asked you to come to order. One more time and I'll have to name the member. Please come to order.

**Ms Martel:** Diane used to receive \$1,000 a month on a regular basis. Her last payment was received on September 13. She confirmed with the employer that a cheque was remitted to the family support plan from the payor on October 3. She has not received that payment. She has not received her payment for November. She has had to cancel her auto insurance because she can't afford to pay for it, she has had to borrow money for rent, her phone is going to be disconnected at the end of this week, and her mother is now buying food for her. Minister, where is Diane's money?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** As I've indicated to this House before, three out of four families have never received the family support to which they were entitled under the family support plan. We are now —

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** That's disgraceful.

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, come to order, please.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As I've indicated, under the old family support plan three out of four families never received the support to which they were legally entitled. 1510

**Mr Christopherson:** Answer the bloody question, Charlie.

**The Speaker:** The member for Hamilton Centre, that's the end of the rope. It's a warning. The next time I'm going to have to name you.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As we reorganize the plan and create the family responsibility office, as I've indicated to

this House, in the first two weeks of November we paid out \$20 million. Some 50% of all callers to the plan are now being answered, versus 6% before.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** We now have approximately 200 staff working in the plan. We've doubled the number of front-line service staff. Some 90% of the funds that are now being received are being paid out to women and children the following business day, and as I've indicated before, we're now processing 5,000 transactions per day, a 25% increase in productivity.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** For a plan that is now supposed to be fixed, it seems awfully strange to me that my constituency office, on Friday alone, got 31 calls from 31 separate cases. One such case is Cindy Cazabon. Cindy was receiving her money from the plan — I emphasize, so that it sinks into your head — up until September 30. She is no longer receiving her \$95 a week. Her husband's employer has confirmed that the money has been remitted. She is going to have her hydro cut off. She has made inquiries to the hotline. Actually, she has not been able to get her plan fixed. She needs her money. Her kids cannot live without hydro. What are you prepared to do for Cindy? How can she believe that your plan is fixed, when she's getting no money?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As I've indicated before, I won't and can't respond to an individual situation. What I will say is that under the reorganization that we are now engaged in, we have reached the stage where close to 80% of all recipients now use direct deposit, something that was sorely lacking in the plan before. We no longer —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Welland-Thorold, come to order, please. The member for Sudbury East, come to order as well.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As I've indicated, we have now reached the stage where close to 80% of all recipients use direct deposit. One of the very significant difficulties with the plan —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** One of the problems we've had is that in the past cheques were being processed by hand, cheques were being sent by mail. We've now gone to 80% of all recipients using direct deposit. Of great significance, in the bill that will be debated very shortly we will allow families who don't need the family support plan to be involved in their transactions to opt out of the plan.

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Under standing order 97(d) there is a requirement that order paper questions are to be answered by the ministry within two weeks of submission. I submitted order paper questions number 598 to 639 to the ministry and to the Clerk on October 17. We received a response October 30 telling us the information would be available November 15. It is now November

19, more than four weeks since we've issued the order paper questions, and we have not received a response from the ministry, in contravention of the standing order. I would ask you to look into that.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I will.

## MOTIONS

### COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTIONS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** I move that the following substitutions be made to the membership of the standing committees:

On the standing committee on estimates, Mrs Elliott be substituted for Mr Clement and Mr Vankoughnet be substituted for Mrs Ross; on the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, Ms Bassett be substituted for Mr Sampson; on the standing committee on the Ombudsman, Mr Vankoughnet be substituted for Mrs Ross; on the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly, Mr Clement be substituted for Mr Froese; on the standing committee on public accounts, Mrs Elliott be substituted for Ms Bassett; on the standing committee on social development, Mrs Ross be substituted for Mrs Ecker and Mr Froese be substituted for Mr Newman.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** I move that Mr Cordiano and Mr Chiarelli exchange places in order of precedence for private members' public business and that, notwithstanding standing order 96(h), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 49, 52 and 53.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** I move that the standing committee on general government be authorized to meet on November 21, 22 and 23, 1996, at times other than those specified in the order of the House dated November 2, 1995, and beyond its normal adjournment time for the purpose of consideration of Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts, and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** Could I have the assurance —

**The Speaker:** Yes, it's debatable. The member for Oriole.

**Mrs Caplan:** Could I have the assurance of the government House leader that members of this Legislature will be welcome and able to address the committee on those dates? We were not permitted to do that the last time the committee met, and I would like the assurance of the government House leader that he has cleared that with the committee Chair and we will be able to address the committee.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I don't care what you do actually. I'll go in rotation. The member for Algoma.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I thought the House understood the importance of this piece of legislation to all members of the House and to the public. It would be most appropriate, I think, for the government House leader to make it clear that the committee will be directed and that the majority on the committee will assure that all members of the public who have input on the numbers of ridings, the boundaries of those ridings, will have a chance to make their views known and that there will not be any arbitrary deadlines put on when we can get the names in and so on and that it will be open to all members of the public, all groups that are interested. I hope the government House leader will make that assurance to all members of this assembly and to the public.

**Hon David Johnson:** I will certainly have a discussion with the Chair of the committee on this item, but I must say that the ultimate decision in this matter rests with the committee and with the Chair of the committee.

Certainly the purpose of the committee hearings is to hear the public at large. I have not been made to believe that anybody from the general public has had any difficulty making representation. I know the member opposite has indicated some concern with regard to members of this House not having input into the committee. Members of this House of course have many opportunities to speak at second and third reading of the particular bill and indeed will, I'm sure, voice their concerns at those opportunities. The main purpose of the committee is to have input from the general public.

All I can say in acknowledgement of this matter is that I will speak to the member, the Chair, but as we know, and both parties have been in government over the last 10 years, the committees are independent in the sense that they decide these matters unto themselves.

**The Speaker:** Further debate? Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

1520

## PETITIONS

### SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the 800,000 children who ride the school buses of Ontario are at risk and their safety is in jeopardy from unsafe drivers who are not stopping for school buses; and

"Whereas the current school bus law is difficult to enforce since not only is a licence plate number required



but positive identification of the driver and vehicle as well, which makes it extremely difficult to obtain a conviction;

"Therefore, be it resolved, that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That private member's Bill 78 be passed.

"The bill doubles the existing range of fines for identified drivers and establishes vehicle owner liability.

"We ask for the support of all members of the Legislature."

The petition is signed by a number of residents from Duart, Thamesville, Merlin and Chatham, and I have affixed my name to it.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I continue to receive thousands of petitions from injured workers and those involved in occupational health and safety who are absolutely outraged at this government's continuing attack on their rights.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

On behalf of our caucus, I add my name to theirs as we do support them.

### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** I have a petition here signed by 661 persons, most of whom are from my riding of Muskoka-Georgian Bay. In accordance with rule 36 in the standing orders, I'll just summarize it by saying that it is in regard to public libraries and public library boards, and I'll file it today.

### SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr Peter North (Elgin):** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the provincial government is planning to make significant changes to the delivery and governance of education in this province; and

"Whereas we as parents believe that school councils should play an important role in education, with clearly defined responsibilities limited to their particular school communities; and

"Whereas we as ratepayers are extremely disturbed that consideration is being given to abolish school boards and eliminate decision-making by locally elected representatives,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the present structure of school boards within the province of Ontario continue to have a major role in governance of schools to deal with broad policies as advocates for the students in their community, to provide cost-efficient educational services and to be directly accountable to the parents and local ratepayers."

### JEU TÉLÉDIFFUSÉ

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) :** J'ai une pétition reçue de Gerry Leroux de St-Isidore.

«A l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

«Attendu que le jeu de Bingo provincial quotidien télédiffusé enlèvera la source principale de revenu des organismes à but non lucratif de diverses localités provinciales ;

«Attendu que le gouvernement actuel a procédé à de nombreuses coupures envers les assistés sociaux et les municipalités, et que la demande d'aide auprès des organismes augmente considérablement ;

«Attendu que les coupures de bénévoles, tels que les Chevaliers de Colomb, les Filles d'Isabelle, le club Lion, Rotary, Kiwanis, Boy Scouts, Optimist et combien d'autres ne seront plus en mesure de répondre aux besoins de personnes nécessiteuses ;

«Nous, soussignés, exigeons que le gouvernement actuel abandonne le projet d'organiser à son profit les Bingos quotidiens télédiffusés à l'échelle provinciale.»

J'y ajoute ma signature.

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from the Hamilton District Injured Workers Group and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the government of Ontario plans to cut injured workers' benefits; and

"Whereas the Hamilton District Injured Workers Group has called a public meeting to discuss this important issue; and

"Whereas no government member was willing to attend said meeting, including the Minister of Labour, the former Minister without Portfolio responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board or any other local government member;

"Therefore we, the injured workers of the Hamilton area, take leave to petition the government of Ontario for full public hearings in Hamilton pertaining to changes to the Workers' Compensation Act."

I add my name to theirs in support.

### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the NDP government under former Premier Bob Rae passed legislation, Bill 181, the Ammunition Regulation Act, placing restrictions on the sale of ammunition in Ontario; and

"Whereas the provisions contained in Bill 181 are time-consuming, onerous and create unnecessary red tape; and

"Whereas the records for which these provisions have been produced do not track criminals; and

"Whereas Bill 181 was passed in only one day, without any discussion with law-abiding gun owners such as farmers, collectors, hunters and recreational shooters, who understand and have a deep respect for the power of firearms and ammunition and the need to maintain and use their equipment in the safest of conditions; and

"Whereas Bill 181 will do nothing to combat the use of illegal ammunition;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal Bill 181, protect the rights of responsible firearms owners and work for tougher penalties against weapons offences."

This petition was signed by many people from all over my riding in Meaford, Croton Station, Markdale and Dundalk.

#### SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads:

"The constituents of Mississauga North (the home riding of the Minister of Education and Training) as well as other residents of Ontario are concerned about the educational and constitutional implications of the moratorium on new school construction.

"We, the undersigned, believe that the moratorium discriminates against children in high-growth areas. Moreover, we believe that the lack of suitable school accommodation violates basic rights, including the right to a quality education and the right to be treated in a fair and equitable manner. We maintain that the failure to build new schools when they are needed is a cut to the classroom. Parents, teachers and students at crowded schools know that resources do not rise proportionally as the number of students increases in a school. Students in crowded schools must share books, computers etc, and these students have less individual time with their teacher.

"We, the undersigned, also believe that the moratorium is unfair to local taxpayers who must assume the costs incurred during the moratorium.... We also believe that the freeze on new school construction is unfair to the building and construction industry. The moratorium translates into thousands of lost jobs and substantially higher levels of unemployment throughout the province of Ontario.

"Accordingly, we demand:

"(1) That the moratorium on school construction be lifted immediately;

"(2) That the full amount of \$167 million be restored immediately to the capital expenditures fund administered by the Ministry of Education and Training."

I affix my signature to this petition.

1530

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario; and

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear that they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

I add my name in support with theirs.

#### TRANSFER PAYMENTS

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** I have a petition signed by a number of Ontarians.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the federal Liberal government has slashed \$2.1 billion in transfer payments to Ontario;

Whereas the federal Liberal government has slashed between \$800 million and \$1 billion in labour market training funding;

"Whereas the federal Liberal government will cut transfers to the provinces by 42.2% while only reducing its own program expenditures by 1.3%;

"Whereas the federal Liberal government shortchanges Ontario by providing only 27% of its training dollars to Ontario despite the fact that Ontario has 35% of Canada's unemployed;

"Whereas the taxpayers of Ontario understand the need for the Mike Harris government to control spending in the province;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) To demand in the strongest terms, on behalf of the taxpayers in Ontario, that the federal Liberal government and Paul Martin stop immediately the unfair cuts in Ontario transfer payments;

"(2) To call on the federal Liberal government to follow Mike Harris's lead in reducing tax levels and reducing spending without unfairly offloading those reductions to its transfer partners;

"(3) To demand that the federal Liberal government stop playing political games in reducing transfer payments to Ontario at the same time that it demands dollar matching programs with its transfer partners."

I've affixed my name to this petition.



## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, in particular the Honourable Elizabeth Witmer.

"Whereas the Occupational Disease Panel is an important entity, we, the undersigned, petition your government to ensure the ongoing survival of the Occupational Disease Panel. We believe that this institution performs an invaluable service for the employers and employees of Ontario in an unbiased and professional manner."

I affix my name to the petition as I support it.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition forwarded by an education conference of United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 175 and Local 633, regarding workers' compensation.

"To Premier Harris:

"We, the undersigned, oppose your government's plan to dismantle the workers' compensation system, including reducing benefits; excluding claims for repetitive strain injuries, muscle injuries, strains, sprains, stress, harassment and most occupational diseases; eliminating pension supplements; handing over control of our claims to our employers for the first four to six weeks after injury; privatizing WCB to large insurance companies; integrating sick benefits into WCB; eliminating or restricting the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, WCAT, including eliminating worker representation on the board; and eliminating the bipartite WCB board of directors.

"Therefore we demand a safe workplace, compensation if we are injured, no reduction in benefits, improved re-employment and vocational rehabilitation, an independent appeal structure with worker representation, access to the office of the worker adviser, that the WCAT be left intact and that the WCB bipartite board of directors be reinstated."

I add my name to theirs.

## DRINKING AND DRIVING

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I have a petition submitted to me by Ann Soucy of Nepean with respect to Bill 85, the anti-drunk driving bill sponsored by the member for Mississauga South, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas drinking and driving is the largest criminal cause of death and injury in Canada;

"Whereas every 45 minutes in Ontario a driver is involved in an alcohol-related crash;

"Whereas most alcohol-related accidents are caused by repeat offenders;

"Whereas lengthy licence suspensions for impaired driving have been shown to greatly reduce repeat offences;

"Whereas the victims of impaired drivers often pay with their lives, while only 22% of convicted impaired drivers go to jail, and even then only for an average of 21 days;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We urge the provincial government to pass legislation that will strengthen measures against impaired drivers in Ontario."

I add my name to the more than 1,000 signatures on this petition.

## NURSING STAFF

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ministry of Health is decreasing the role of registered nurses in Ontario; and

"Whereas decreasing the use of registered nurses is not a cost-effective measure. This data is well documented through comprehensive research in the United States, England and Canada; and

"Whereas a decline or elimination of registered nurses has demonstrated the following undesirable outcomes: a substantial increase in mortality-morbidity rates; an increase in length of hospitalization stays; an increase in the number of complications; an increase in readmission rates to hospitals from long-term-care facilities and the community; an increase in the number of patient/resident/family complaints and dissatisfaction; an increase in overall health care costs; and

"Whereas registered nurses, with their in-depth knowledge and assessment skills, actively demonstrate leadership and professional expertise that result in positive clinical outcomes in the hospital setting, long-term care facilities as well as the community; and

"Whereas registered nurses are one of the very few health care and regulated professionals who have in-depth assessment skills that evaluate the status of the whole person 24 hours a day;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Ministry of Health stop the chaos they are creating in health care and recognize and support the important role of the registered nurse in the delivery of health care in Ontario."

I add my signature to this important petition.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### GOOD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 SUR LA BONNE GESTION DES FINANCES PUBLIQUES

Mr Eves moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 93, An Act to amend certain statutes administered by the Minister of Finance to promote good management of the Province's finances, to implement certain provisions of the 1996 Budget and to implement other aspects of the Government's agenda and to amend the MPPs Pension Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 93, Loi visant à modifier des lois dont l'application relève du ministre des Finances, à favoriser la bonne gestion des finances de la province, à mettre en oeuvre des dispositions du budget de 1996 et d'autres éléments du programme du gouvernement et à modifier la Loi de 1996 sur le régime de retraite des députés.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I have some very brief introductory comments. I'm introducing the Good Financial Management Act, an act that will help streamline government and make taxpayers' access to government easier by implementing various technical amendments and additional items announced in the May 7 budget.

A number of technical amendments are also being made to various tax statutes in order to reduce the administrative burden currently placed on taxpayers, to remove tax loopholes and redundant provisions and to make tax legislation easier to understand. Examples of those would be the Financial Administration Act, the Employer Health Tax Act, the Income Tax Act, the Labour Sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act, the Land Transfer Tax Act, the Retail Sales Tax Act, the Tobacco Tax Act, the Mining Tax Act, the Corporations Tax Act, the Corporations Tax Amendment Act and the MPPs Pension Act, 1996.

Changes to the Financial Administration Act will consolidate borrowing, investing and other financial activities within the Ontario financing authority. The bill also makes important amendments to the Employer Health Tax Act and MPPs Pension Act, 1996.

#### CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE ET À LA FAMILLE

Mr Gerretsen moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 94, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act / Projet de loi 94, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Very briefly, the bill puts into practice the resolution that was passed a couple of weeks ago in that it will amend the Child and Family Services Act to require that all service providers who provide a service to children in a year under that act report to the Minister of Community and Social Services on the status of those children by March 31 of the following year. Basically, it's intended to implement the resolution that was passed by a majority vote two weeks ago.

1540

### OPPOSITION DAY

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

Mrs McLeod moved opposition day number 4:

Whereas the Common Sense Revolution promises not to cut education spending in the classroom; and

Whereas the millions of dollars in cuts to education brought in by Mike Harris and his Minister of Education and Training, John Snobelen, have in fact hurt children and affected the classroom; and

Whereas Mike Harris and his Minister of Education and Training, John Snobelen, have cut nearly \$1 billion out of our elementary and secondary education through reductions in legislative grants, social contract reductions and expenditure control plan reductions; and

Whereas Mike Harris and his Minister of Education and Training, John Snobelen, have forced thousands of Ontario children to sit in overcrowded classrooms; and

Whereas Mike Harris and his Minister of Education and Training, John Snobelen, have forced many children with special needs to lose their resource teachers; and

Whereas thousands of Ontarians will no longer have the opportunity to attend junior kindergarten and adult education programs due to poor policy decisions by the Minister of Education and Training; and

Whereas Mike Harris and his Minister of Education and Training, John Snobelen, have forced thousands of Ontario teachers to lose their jobs; and

Whereas parents no longer have confidence in Mike Harris and his Minister of Education and Training, John Snobelen, to make decisions with the best interests of children in mind; and

Whereas parents and other taxpayers have clearly said that the government is cutting too much too quickly, especially where education is concerned; and

Whereas parents feel that the Minister of Education and Training has not heard their concerns to date; and

Whereas the only thing guiding the Harris government is the tax cut;

Therefore this House calls on the Mike Harris government to stop any further reductions in the funding of our elementary and secondary education; start listening to parents, students and teachers on issues of education reform; and bring forward policies and initiatives that are guided by the best interest of children.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** I believe the message of this motion is a crucial one for this government to hear since we are likely days away from the Minister of Finance's next round of cuts.

We know that the Minister of Finance needs to find \$3 billion more to pay for Mike Harris's tax scheme. We know that last year's \$400-million cut to education was said to be just the first round of cuts to education. The Minister of Education, who is not exactly the most supportive minister education has ever had, has bragged that he can take \$1.2 billion from education to do his part to pay for Mike Harris's tax cut. He has also said that if we thought last year's cuts were tough, wait until we see this year's cuts, and that has all of us who are truly concerned about education truly worried. We are worried because we're already seeing the effect of last year's cuts, following several years of reduced funding. We are seeing the effects of cuts on students in the classroom despite all the promises of the Conservatives that classroom education would be protected.

The minister of course blames irresponsible school boards for the fact that cuts are affecting classroom education. He ignores the fact that administration has been cut by 25% to 50% since 1991. That was the school boards' first response to the cuts that came before this government took office. School trustees simply do not cut classroom education first; they do everything they can to



avoid that, so obviously it would be administration that was the first thing to be cut. Administration now counts for less than 5% of the dollars spent on education in this province.

When that particular line of defence for the cuts wears a little bit thin, the minister goes after school boards themselves. We've never felt there was much to be saved there, if anything. It appears that the Minister of Education now agrees with us. He says, "There's not really any money to be saved by cutting school boards." He talks about efficiencies. Well, if there's no money to be saved in efficiencies, what are the efficiencies all about?

Who knows which of the latest notions of school board amalgamation the minister is pursuing these days? But whatever it is, it's not going to stop future cuts from hurting students and limiting their educational opportunities.

Of course, when all else fails as a target for this minister's scapegoating, he can point to what he calls overpaid and underworked teachers. I am not going to get into the details of the irresponsible and biased study of teachers' salaries that this minister had done in his effort to distort the picture of teachers' salaries in Ontario, and I'm not going to take the time to go over the equally irresponsible and biased study of collective bargaining that he had his friend Mr Paroian carry out. The minister can keep looking for scapegoats as a convenient excuse for the impact of the cuts that he has already made, but the fact is that these cuts are hurting kids and these cuts have to stop.

What we want to do today is to help tell the stories that are being told by parents and students and teachers in our constituency offices, in our communities, and in my home town of Thunder Bay at a public forum on education that we held last week. We had over 100 people come out that night to tell their stories of what's happening in education and our phones have been constantly ringing since with callers who want to add their concerns.

We're hearing from students like the secondary school student who told us of classes with 40 students. Some of her classmates are sitting on buckets because there are no desks for them. She said it was a good news, bad news story from her perspective. The good news was that she would soon be out of high school; the bad news was her worry about what would happen at university with the cuts that are already hitting there.

Another high school student had just been part of a student council discussion of proposed changes to the secondary school curriculum. He said that students were really concerned about fellow students who were going to be shut out, particularly if academic opportunities are denied to general level students who would have to spend 20% to 40% of their time in an unsupervised workplace.

The students' concerns were echoed by those of the secondary school teachers. The teachers spoke of groups of students having to share chemistry lab stations. A history department head said there had not been new textbooks in his department for the last five years. I suspect the textbooks that particular history teacher uses are like some of the ones I brought into the Legislature two weeks ago: textbooks held together by elastics

because there's no money to buy new ones. One student said her class was using the same textbook her mother had used. I don't think you're ever going to convince that particular young woman that she's getting an up-to-date education.

One of the English teachers questioned the inconsistencies in the secondary school reform proposals. He wondered why you would cut English credits in half but require a literacy test. I guess the thinking is that you don't have to teach the skill, you just test for it, and if the student doesn't get it by some sort of osmosis, well then, too bad.

Of course we heard from the elementary side of education — different issues, different stories, but the same kinds of concerns. One elementary principal spoke of the loss of music programs and family studies and industrial arts; the loss of field trips; the 20% reduction in the budget for textbooks; the loss of special education testing and expert consultation for teachers who have special needs students in their classrooms; the loss of school librarians.

One teacher said the budget for textbooks in her classroom was \$400 for the year. If a text costs \$40, that means 10 new books for a class of 33 students — three to four students to a textbook.

Another teacher said the budget for photocopying had been limited to such a point that you could only provide a page and a half per student per day, so you can't make up for the lack of textbooks with teacher-prepared materials.

Class sizes here too are a major concern. The classes in grades 3 to 8 in our school board area range from 33 to 44 students. They're somewhat larger than the classes in grades 1 and 2 because every effort is being made, in spite of the cuts, to keep the class sizes in those two first grades a little bit smaller. There was a previous government that recognized the importance of those early grades, 1 and 2, and provided special funding to keep the class sizes there low. That was a campaign promise made and kept, and that was a campaign promise that made some sense. But this government has wiped all of that out with its cuts.

The numbers are even up on school buses, where kids are sitting three to a seat and the law even allows some to stand. Parents expressed their concerns for the safety of their children.

Other parents had concerns about the safety of their special needs children. Mrs Curistan took her epileptic child out of school because his epilepsy had not been stabilized and he needed one-to-one attention on the school ground. The school couldn't provide it; they didn't have the resources. She's now even more worried about what will happen to her second child when that child goes to school next year. Her second child is autistic and will need the one-to-one attention constantly.

**1550**

Mrs Curistan's fears are well founded, given what we heard from the parents of other special needs children. One parent of an autistic child told us that her child no longer received special education support even though he's in a regular classroom. We heard of classes of 34 students with 10 identified special needs children in the



class. In this kind of situation, it is impossible for the teacher to teach the children without special needs, let alone give the special needs child the attention that's needed if that child is to learn.

Over and over again we heard from worried, upset parents, from demoralized, discouraged teachers, from teachers who know what the students need and know that they can't meet those needs. One parent of a special needs child described what is happening as "integration by abandonment." Another said, "It's getting pretty sad when you have to put a pricetag on your child's life." It was difficult for these parents to tell their stories, but they are determined to stand up and fight for their children. None of them has ever had to be politically active before. They're prepared to be now if that's what it takes to make this government hear them.

Parent councils are proving to be wonderfully effective advocates for the education of their children, but they are worried. They're worried that the government is going to expect them to run their schools and to do it voluntarily. They're not prepared to do that and they don't want to lose their school boards. They like to be able to take their concerns directly to their local trustees and they know how impossible it is to get big, distant government in Queen's Park to even return their phone calls.

One mother came to tell me about her two grown-up children who are both doing very well in graduate programs and now in professional work. She didn't come to brag about her kids. She came to say what a wonderful education they had had in our school system and she wondered why we have a Minister of Education who keeps saying, "The system is broken." It appears as though the minister's own parliamentary assistant is now asking exactly the same question.

These are just some of the stories we're hearing, and the stories are being repeated in every community, in every school, in every classroom. We are truly concerned about what the stories will be like if there is another round of cuts next week. There will be no junior kindergarten left. Twenty-five boards have already cancelled junior kindergarten. Class sizes will be even larger, although it's hard to imagine that. There will be less and less support for the special needs child, and since there will be no programs available, no efforts will even be made to identify the special needs. Music teachers, librarians, outdoor education, those will all be things of the past. Those who wanted to take education back to the basics will certainly rejoice because there will be nothing else left.

Boards will try to reduce teacher preparation time if the minister doesn't do that for them. This will mean that teachers who are already being asked to teach larger classes will be asked to teach more classes. The hours that are now spent coaching and directing the school play and advising the history club will have to be spent in course preparation and marking. Extracurricular activities will simply disappear.

That is what we are told will be the result of future cuts. If there is, as promised, another round of cuts, if education gets hit again in this next statement from Mike Harris and the Minister of Finance, the impact will be enormous. It doesn't matter what changes the minister

introduces outside the classroom; there will be no preventing the destruction that more cuts will bring to classroom education.

This is not a question of organizational efficiency; this is a question of adequate resources. The minister shouldn't try to argue that we're spending 10% more than the national average on education. Ontario's spending per capita is sixth in the country. BC, Manitoba and Quebec all spend more than we do, as do the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, and that's before the cuts began. I wonder if the tax cut that Mike Harris considers so important is so important that Ontario can't provide for its children what BC and Manitoba and Quebec clearly see as a priority.

We risk losing everything that publicly funded education has achieved in the last 30 years, including the giant strides that were made under earlier Conservative governments and under former Tory ministers of education. I am not sure this minister has any appreciation of the goals of public education or any understanding of what has been achieved.

The goal of education in this province has been to provide equality of educational opportunity to every person, with sensitivity to individual needs. It is an ambitious goal, but we have come farther in achieving it than anyone might have believed possible. Now those achievements and all the progress that has been made in meeting individual needs and providing a real equality of opportunity are being lost because of a promise to reduce taxes for those who need it least.

It may be that the response of this government to the pressures that their funding cuts have placed on education will be to let the private sector in more and let those who can pay for the best buy something better for their kids. Maybe that's what this government's vision for education comes down to, developing a two-tiered education system. When that happens a fundamental belief of this province that every individual should have access to the best quality education we can provide, regardless of ability to pay, will be lost.

I don't believe the Ontario public will accept the abandonment of our values. I don't believe they will accept the attack on the quality of education our children receive. Parents and students are organizing to oppose what they see happening. They are deeply concerned. They're not going to sit by quietly and let our school systems be ravaged. This government needs to hear their stories so that government understands what's happening. They need to hear the concerns of parents and students and teachers, and indeed trustees. They need to listen to people who are involved and knowledgeable and care about the kind of education our schools provide, and then they need to stop the cuts.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I want to congratulate the leader of the official opposition for bringing this matter before the House and to say that we as a caucus are in complete support of the sentiments behind this resolution.

All of us in this assembly, everyone in Ontario, recognizes that the most important person in the education system is the student. Too often in our debates around funding for education and the direction of educa-



tion we forget that students should be and must be the centre of our concern.

The Conservative Party, when it ran for election before June 1995, said it was going to make cuts to education. We must be fair to them. They did say they were going to make cuts to funding for education. But they also said that in making those cuts there would be no harm to classroom education for students.

The Conservatives argued that there was so much fat in the system, that so much was expended by school boards outside of the classroom, that large cuts could be made without adversely affecting classroom education. I submit that position misunderstood how education is funded, misunderstood the kinds of efficiencies that had been achieved by boards of education and by teachers over the last number of years, some at the behest of our government and some through their own initiatives.

It also misunderstood what is meant by classroom education. The minister, Mr Snobelen, has continually argued that 47% of what is done in education is done outside the classroom. He points to Mr Sweeney, who was a former Liberal cabinet minister who was appointed by our government to do a study of school boards in the province. He was given an additional mandate by this government and he came back and he said 47%.

I think it's very important for us to analyse what Mr Sweeney said was included in the 47%: not only administrative costs, not only busing, not only custodial and maintenance services, but he also included special education, remedial courses, library, guidance, counselling, teachers' preparation time as if teachers were not preparing for the classroom, the kind of work that teachers do in terms of helping students who need extra assistance, the discussions teachers have with parents and with colleagues to assist students, and extra help they give the students. That's all included in so-called outside-the-classroom activities.

In arguing about what's in the classroom and what's outside, I think we are forgetting about the centre of classroom education, what classroom education is for: It's for the students. It's designed to serve the students. But Mr Snobelen seems to take the position that as long as it's outside the four walls of the classroom, it doesn't have to do with the students' education, which is a basic misunderstanding of what education is about.

1600

As a result of his comments, there is tremendous demoralization in the education system. I will give you a couple of examples.

I have here a letter that is dated October 23 from the Board of Education for the City of London, W. H. Brock, the chairperson. Among other things, Mr Brock says:

"The community, including trustees, have been inundated from the time of the Minister of Education's original statement, 'create a crisis,' with almost daily negative volleys about public education. To date the crisis-centred announcements have been inflammatory and without sound reasoning, which would lead one to believe that decisions may already have been made on the governance and finance of education."

That's significant, that a chair of a board of education would say that the minister, who is responsible for

advocating for education of students in the province, has been inundating boards, trustees, teachers and the public with "daily negative volleys about public education."

The minister has always said there haven't been cuts to classroom education, in line with the promise the Conservatives made in the election campaign. I have here a release by the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. I know the minister would cast aspersions at a release from a teachers' federation, because he would say that a teachers' federation isn't interested in students, I guess, and is only interested in teachers. But I think that really is a misunderstanding of what teachers are about and why people enter that profession.

Anyway, this federation, the women teachers, says: "This government has already cut \$400 million from the education budget and is threatening a further \$1 billion in cuts. As a result, 26 school boards have eliminated junior kindergarten programs" — which, as we know, this government made an option — "53 school boards have made cuts to their special education programs, 21 boards have made cuts to their music programs and 32 school boards have made cuts to the library program."

That's important to note, because we have a minister who has stood before us on a number of occasions in this place and has said, flat out, that there have been no cuts to special education programs, and yet we have a federation that has the information saying that 53 boards across Ontario have made cuts to their special education programs.

I wonder, has the minister really looked at what's happening or is he protected in some cocoon in that office at the top of the Ministry of Education where he may talk about numbers and budgets, but he never really ever talks about students and what's happening to them, and to students with special needs in particular?

Also I have — this is not from a teachers' federation; this is from a parents group, the Kew Beach School and Community Association, which is interested in Kew Beach Public School here in Toronto.

"We are writing to voice our concerns about how cutbacks and changes have already directly affected the classrooms" — again, this is related to a government promise not to affect classrooms — "larger class sizes, fewer supplies, less teacher support." They point out that the minister has been "saying classrooms will not be hit." Then they say: "We are very worried about how further proposed massive cutbacks and changes will affect the education of our children."

"We want to know that there will be serious consultation with the people who have the most at stake, the parents and teachers of our children, before any of these cutbacks and changes are initiated."

"We want a guarantee that...children" will be put first, that if education doesn't put children first, we are not meeting our obligations to the kids in this province.

The minister goes around saying that special education hasn't been hit, yet I have a letter here dated September 19, this time from the Sudbury Board of Education, which says:

"The reduced funding to boards of education in this province has resulted in significant cuts to programs and services to exceptional students. Boards of education have



found themselves in the unfortunate position of having very few options in which to reduce costs, with the result that special education programs and services, mandated under the Education Act, are being dramatically reduced."

This board points out that even though it is the law that boards of education must provide services to students with special needs, they have very few options and, like many other boards, have had to cut programs and services in special education.

Kids with special needs in this province have been profoundly affected by many cuts, not just cuts in education but also in health care. I have a memo here which points out that "Peel Memorial Hospital announced that effective immediately there would be no children's outpatient service available. This affects speech and language service, which had been provided on an outpatient basis to preschool children with communication disorders, including articulation, stuttering, speech and language delays."

This means those cuts will make it even more difficult for kids with special needs in Peel region when they reach kindergarten and primary education, because then the education system will be responsible for dealing with the speech problems and helping these kids overcome them. Yet as we've seen, despite what the minister says, those kinds of programs and services are being cut by boards of education directly as a result of the cuts the minister has made in transfer payments to school boards.

The minister goes around and says, "We've cut less than 2%, 1.8% of the total amount spent on education in Ontario. Any board should be able to find less than 2% without adversely affecting kids' education."

That really is a shell game. In the estimates debate of the Ministry of Education and Training before the committee in this Legislature a senior official of the ministry admitted that the cut is not 1.8% by this government; rather, it is at least 5.3% of the general legislative grants that this government gives to boards across the province — 5.3%. So we have a senior civil servant in the ministry saying it is 5.3% — I thought it was higher than that at about 8% — but the senior official said it was 5.3%, and the very next day the minister got up in this House and repeated that it's 1.8%.

Somebody a little earlier said, "Well, who's telling the truth?" That is a very good question because the minister says he's cut less than 2% when a member of his own ministry staff admits that it's over 5%.

He also says that special education programs haven't been hit when teachers' federations, boards of education and parents' groups all say they've been adversely affected. He says programs shouldn't have been hit when we have teachers' federations and boards saying programs like library, music and others have been cut.

Who is working for the students of this province? Certainly not the Minister of Education and Training. His whole approach seems to be simply the bottom line: "Let's get as much money out of the system as possible and let's not consult with people who might disagree. Let's not talk to students; let's not talk to parents; let's not talk to teachers; let's not talk to trustees, because they might disagree with us." They might put the student first. They might say that students' education is too important

to simply be looked at as a way of getting more money to help finance a tax scheme that will give tax breaks to the top 10% of the population of this province.

1610

I have another, from the Vance Chapman Elementary School Advisory Council from Thunder Bay. They wrote to the minister and in the letter they say:

"The investment of removing barriers and providing supports was resulting in a positive impact on the children's future. Cuts to the support system for these children are detrimental to all. Children with special needs are once again being placed at risk — a situation that would not have been tolerated as recently as one year ago. The shortsightedness of this government in this circumstance cannot be excused."

"The shortsightedness of this government in this circumstance cannot be excused." These are not people who have a vested interest other than the future of their children. There has been no consultation with people like the Vance Chapman Elementary School Advisory Council.

This government has simply taken \$400 million out of the education system, the elementary and secondary systems, last year, which on an annualized basis is over \$800 million, and now the minister is talking about taking a further \$600 million out of the system — over \$1 billion in two years, and he claims this hasn't affected classroom education, that there has been no effect on special education, that it hasn't affected programs that are important to kids' futures, despite all the evidence, despite the parents, the boards and the teachers.

For that reason, I call upon all members of this House to consider very carefully this resolution that is before the assembly and, by voting for it, to express the opinion to the minister that he had better find out what is actually happening to our students, what is happening to the kids in Ontario, and that it's about time he started putting children first rather than the dollar signs that are before his eyes at all times.

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training, I welcome the opportunity to debate the opposition motion. It gives me a chance to clarify the position of the Minister of Education and Training and to set the record straight.

I want to start by clearly articulating that the Ministry of Education and Training's bottom line is and always has been the students. The changes we're making are for their sake. Let me remind you that that's what education is all about: the students and their future.

Currently we have a system that has an enormous amount of duplication. It's a system that is quite costly and a system that, frankly, often stifles good teaching. None of that benefits students. For instance, we know there are opportunities for school boards to do more in the area of cost-sharing arrangements with other levels of government. There are examples of school boards joining together with municipalities and hospitals in joint purchasing programs to cut costs and bureaucracy. Between school boards there are opportunities for joint busing and multipurpose facilities.

Let me state categorically that it's this government's intention to create an education system of the highest



quality. We will provide Ontario students with a safe, orderly and supportive learning environment and a first-class education system.

Here are some examples of what we've done.

We've launched a major reform of the high school program. We're seeking public input on proposals for the new high school curriculum. This past month my colleague, parliamentary assistant Tony Skarica, has been chairing public meetings on high school reform across the province. Starting in 1998 we will be moving to a four-year high school program. Ontario is the only province in Canada that still has a grade 13. Furthermore, two royal commissions on education and countless experts have advised us there is no benefit to the added grade. Our colleges and universities have told us there is no noticeable difference in achievement between students who come from other provinces where grade 12 is the final grade and students from Ontario. We believe it's time we listened to that repeated advice and caught up with the rest of Canada.

Our new high school curricula will have a stronger focus on career education, creating new partnerships between high schools, colleges, universities, parents and the community, and we will expand our co-op program.

It may interest the House to know that in the current system, a child in grade 11 attending classes in Thunder Bay, for example, is not learning the same thing that a child in grade 11 in Toronto is learning. So some students may study Shakespeare, perhaps the greatest master of the English language ever, and others may miss out. We will be narrowing that gap, ensuring that all courses in the new high school curriculum will have high standards consistent throughout the province.

Many parents and educators have read in detail these proposals in our discussion paper *Excellence in Education: High School Reform*. It was sent to all schools for parents and teachers to review.

Some of these proposals are already in place in many high schools throughout Ontario. For example, many schools have teacher advisers. That means each student has one teacher they can turn to regularly for advice or to help plan their future. In my own riding of Halton Centre, Iroquois Ridge high school has a dedicated team of teacher advisers who can help plan courses of study, advise students and keep an eye on the students' progress. It's an awesome program. Parents can also meet with the adviser to discuss questions or concerns of their children. These student-teacher partnerships are proving to be so successful, we want to help all students to reap the benefit of having a teacher adviser.

Our initiatives to improve quality will continue throughout the system. We will conduct regular province-wide testing. This will be done through the arm's-length Education Quality and Accountability Office, which reports to this House, not the minister of the day, on how our children compare to other jurisdictions in reading, writing and arithmetic. The EQAO has designed and manages a range of assessment programs that will analyse test results and make recommendations to the government for the improvement of the education system and student performance.

Last month, we began field-testing three standard report cards to help produce one which will eventually be

introduced in all schools in the province. This standard report card will give all parents clear, consistent information and personalized comments on their children's strengths and weaknesses.

To support high-quality teaching, we formally launched the Ontario College of Teachers in September. The college will develop and enforce standards for teacher training, certification and practice. It would be a mistake to underestimate the potential this college has to improve education. By giving teachers the power to regulate their own profession, we are putting the responsibility for excellent teaching in the hands of those who are best qualified to know what a teacher should and must be, today and in the future. Parents will be better assured that students are getting the best teaching possible and teachers will be assured that they are getting the best training possible.

What about cost? We continue to examine education financing too. We want to end waste and duplication. A little more than a year ago, we were elected with a plan. We listened to the people. We heard them say they wanted lasting change in the way Ontario is governed, an end to government waste, and to have more value for their tax dollars.

Yes, there have been some cuts that affected schools, but these cuts are hurting classrooms because school boards are not cutting where they should be. The Sweeney report found that 47% of school board expenditures are outside the classroom. That's where school boards should be cutting. Instead, some school boards have raised taxes and cut programs.

The Minister of Education and Training reduced grants to school boards in 1996 by a total of \$400 million. This amounts to 1.8% of school boards' operating expenditures. That's operating expenditures — their total budget. There isn't a family or business I know of which hasn't saved more than that.

I will point out to the members for Fort William and Algoma that special education funding has not been cut. It has been increased from \$796.5 million in 1995 to \$801.1 million in 1996.

School boards were directed to meet our reduction by cutting costs outside the classroom and without increasing the tax burden on local ratepayers. But our research shows that 100 school boards did not manage to reduce costs outside the classroom. Instead, they raised taxes and made cuts. In some cases, those cuts have affected the classroom.

1620

The Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force found that 47%, or \$6.7 billion, of school board expenditures represents costs outside the classroom. The task force recommended that non-classroom expenditures made by school boards be limited to 40% of their total budgets. That would reduce education expenditures by about \$1 billion a year. On a per-student basis, the Ontario school system is spending a total of close to \$1 billion more than the average of the other provinces in Canada.

It's this spending beyond our means that threatens the future of Ontario's students. We do not want to hand over to the young people of this province a bill for their education in the form of never-ending debts and deficits.



We are working to improve quality education programming in parallel with bringing our spending into line with that of the other provinces. The Minister of Education and Training is working closely with the Who Does What panel. The panel has already made important recommendations on property tax reform, and as a first step we've begun a province-wide reassessment of property values. The panel submitted a letter to both Al Leach and John Snobelen providing its recommendations on how education should be funded. The letter outlined a number of recommendations on how taxpayers should be taxed for education. All these recommendations will be carefully reviewed and considered before the government makes any decisions.

In addition to the recommendations of the Who Does What panel, we'll be taking into consideration the recommendations of lawyer Leon Paroian. He reported on the collective bargaining arrangements between teachers' unions and school boards. He has extensive experience working for both school boards and teachers' federations. Bill 100, despite numerous studies, has not been significantly altered for 20 years. Decisions on his recommendations must be weighed within the context of several related matters, such as who is responsible for school governance and how education is financed.

I understand that a number of groups may have difficulty with some of these recommendations, but that does not mean they should not be considered. We hear a lot about structures and about job benefits that are sacred in education. In my view, the only thing that is sacred is our children's future. You will find that this government is improving the school system to make it better for our students, teachers and parents in Ontario. In the end we will have an improved and affordable school system.

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** It's with great pride that I partake in this debate on our education opposition day motion put forth by my leader.

I'd like to begin by saying that the Minister of Education, when he first came into this House, had indicated he was going to create a crisis in education. I must say that he is getting closer and closer to creating that crisis, whether it be in the capital funding which he has cut which is being taken out of our classrooms, which of course has put more and more portables on to the school yards of schools across the province, or whether it be the assault he put on teachers, an assault that I took personally, being a former educator. To listen to him, just days before the teachers returned to the classroom, suggest that they did not have a commitment to the children of this province, that they did not have the commitment it would take to ensure the best quality of education in the country, was something I could not believe.

Again, if the minister wants a crisis, he's moving closer and closer to it. For him to even suggest that teachers were not the most committed to the students we've ever had was something I could not believe. I think maybe the minister might want to take a lesson from the teachers of the province and find out what it is to be committed to a cause, committed to education, as we'd like to see him be.

I would just like to read part of a letter from a constituent of mine in Sioux Lookout, and I think this speaks

on behalf of many people throughout the province. I know it speaks on behalf of the many constituents I talk to on a daily basis. He says in his letter to the minister, "Your cutbacks are affecting the classroom despite your promise that this would not happen." This is Allen Best from Sioux Lookout. He writes: "You are moving too quickly on changing education. It is too important an issue to make rash decisions without a plan for the future. It is also not an issue to be bashing the players in the game as I have heard you doing. Our children's future is at stake." Mr Best concludes his letter to the minister by stating, "Don't gamble with our students' futures."

I think he has hit the nail right on the head. What this minister is doing is gambling with the future of our students. When he says he's not having an impact on the classroom, all he has to do is take a look at areas that he really, truly is having an impact on, such as the library. He considers the library not a part of the classroom. You speak to any teacher in the system and ask them where a part of their teaching is carried on, whether it be in the library or with the use of the library. This minister seems to think that has no impact on classroom education.

I had a good number of students in my riding protest the minister's cuts because he was telling them that physical education was going to be taken out of the program, physical education that led to the development of sports teams that would travel throughout the region. Their boards were having to say no to that because they were suffering from the cutbacks by this Minister of Education.

I cannot say that I was so astounded as when I heard that the user fees in the schools are growing. Students are being asked for more and more: to supply more and more for the mine of supplies, for travel, which is very important to students in northwestern Ontario. We depend heavily on travel to get our students out into the other areas of the province. The Ontario young travellers program is a very, very important part of our program, but parents are finding that they are being asked on a regular basis to supply more and more of that funding.

There's something I just heard the other day. A teacher was telling me that they are now required to raise funding in order to pay for the supply teacher who will come in while these students travel, something I've never heard of before and something that I know they're finding to be an extra challenge.

Just a couple of weeks ago I asked the Minister of Education to speak to a teacher in the classroom who had come to me and said that she was burning out at a very quick rate. This is a teacher I've known for a good number of years, a young, vibrant, committed teacher. I asked the minister to pick up the phone and call Barbara, and I gave him the numbers. I gave him the number to Barbara's school; I gave him the number to Barbara's home. I just wanted him to call and speak to her and ask her about what was actually happening in the classroom. You know what happened, Madam Speaker? She got a phone call from the minister's secretary, who gave her a good number of excuses and a good number of things the minister was allegedly doing. But she didn't want that. She wanted the minister, and I wanted the minister, to call her, a front-line worker, to find out what was hap-



pening in that school in Kenora. He did not have the courtesy to do that. He had his secretary call Barbara. I will certainly be taking that issue up with him again because I think it's extremely important that the minister hear what is going on in that classroom.

I would just say, in wrapping up, that I would like the minister to pay a little bit more attention to what is happening around him and to make sure our children are put first, not the bottom line, when it comes to education in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs Margaret Marland):** Further debate?

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I'm just going to speak for a few minutes so that my colleague the member for Fort York can speak and my leader as well later. I'm going to speak very specifically to the situation in my riding and leave it to my colleague from Fort York to talk more about the specifics of the impacts that are already being felt in Metro and will be felt even more.

I know I'm not supposed to hold up props, and I'll do this quickly because it's so pretty. This is from a child in a school in my riding, a drawing that says, "We Like Skhool." I've received many of these drawings with letters attached, mounds of letters from parents from all over my riding expressing extreme concern about what is going on with the created crisis in education. What I'm going to talk about is the process, however.

There was a question raised in this House on November 7 by the Leader of the Opposition to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing about a phone call which was made to John Matheson, who works for the firm of Cassels Brock and Blackwell, about the letter that the parents' group from Franklin school in my riding — some of them are here in the gallery today. A lawyer they hired wrote on their behalf to David Crombie, the chair of the Who Does What panel, to ask some very important questions about the process.

I can't take the time now to read all the details of that letter, but I can assure you that as very concerned parents who have children in the school system in Metro, they had legitimate questions to ask the Who Does What panel about the process. In particular, this letter was around how this subcommittee, the finance subcommittee from the panel on education was set up. Their questions were around: "What are their terms of reference? Who are these people? We want to meet with you to be heard." All kinds of questions like that, extremely serious questions.

1630

They kept writing and they kept getting no responses. They were unable to get answers to their questions. Their major concern, however, is that the government and the panel refused to put on a representative from Metro. This is a subpanel discussing restructuring of financing of the education system, which is obviously going to have huge impacts for the students of Metro. There was no representation from Metro on that subpanel — absolutely ludicrous.

These parents decided to hire a lawyer to write a letter saying they wanted answers and they had reason to believe, or he had reason to believe, that a lawsuit could be brought forward because there were a lot of questions

about the constitutionality of this panel. What happened is that shortly after the letter was sent, a lawyer who works for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing called somebody from the law firm. Shortly after that, lo and behold, suddenly the lawyer in question, Brian Donovan, who I think did a very courageous thing — first of all worried about his job because he was intimidated by the law firm. We don't know exactly what was said in that conversation, but after that phone call was made — gone. They withdrew. The firm withdrew the threat of a lawsuit.

I take this very seriously and I think the citizens of Ontario would take this very seriously. It is a gross interference in the democratic process, and I say to the minister that this is by no means the end of it. His answer in the House was totally inappropriate and unacceptable. He basically said it was frivolous and tried to find out if it was serious or not. This is not the end of the matter.

I congratulate the parents from Franklin school and all of the parents all over my riding and all over Metro who are working so hard to bring this government to some kind of accountability and to answer their questions. It's not happening, but they are working hard to be heard. Without them, this would be just rammed through. I believe the minister has got to start listening to the parents and the teachers of this province.

The last thing I want to say is that I am extremely concerned about what's going to happen to adult education. We know that if another \$1 billion is taken out of the system and money is transferred out of Metro, goodbye to junior kindergarten and goodbye to adult education.

This is a government that says it wants people who have dropped out of school to get an education so they can get a job. There are new Canadians in my riding who go to the Jones Avenue school, the Adult Learning Centre. They're working hard to get a high school diploma, because we know unemployment among those who do not have a high school education — I forget the number but it's high, it's higher than most other groups of people. They are scared to death. I met with them recently, wonderful people, many new Canadians working so hard to learn English so they can get a job, many single parents going back to school and terrified because they can't go to night school, if that's where we're heading. They need child care.

There are so many aspects to this whole so-called created crisis. The minister, as we know, needs to find \$1 billion more. It is atrocious to even attempt to take that money out of the education system. It already has hurt the classroom. This will have an absolutely terrible effect on the quality of education, not only for our children but for the adults who are going to school and trying to move up in the world.

I congratulate the Liberal Party for bringing this opposition day motion forward today. I'm glad to have had an opportunity to participate in the debate and I hope that some of the members from the government party are hearing the same things from their constituents and will consider supporting this very important motion today.

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to rise to speak to this



motion. As a father of four children, I, like all the citizens of Ontario, have a vested interest in our education system. My children appreciate their teachers and so do I. The Minister of Education and I have had many opportunities to tell teachers throughout this province that we appreciate what they do, yet somehow the message has not gotten out.

As I listened to the opposition members, you would think the government members of the House do not appreciate teachers and what they do on a day-to-day basis. This simply is not the case. True, we and many others have repeatedly said that our education system is broken. But let's be very clear: We're not saying the teachers are at fault for that fact. I have talked to many teachers, who are constituents, friends, family, who one on one will tell you what is wrong with the system and when it started to go wrong.

So I would like to say very clearly that we appreciate teachers. They work very hard. They care very deeply about children and the youth they teach. Therefore, when we say the system is broken, we're not placing blame on our front-line workers. It's because of other factors, most far beyond the control of the classroom teachers.

To get to what I mean, let's look at what constitutes the education system. The system is complex and made up of interconnected groups and interests. There are research departments in faculties of education. Academics receive funds to conduct studies and report on state-of-the-art research. The recommendations of these studies make their way to the Ministry of Education policy officials and on down to the boards of education.

Parents and parent activity groups work diligently on behalf of individual groups across the province, such as special needs associations. They provide a very important and crucial public service by keeping government responsive to children's needs and their rights as human beings. They too conduct research and provide the Ministry of Education with recommendations for policy direction.

Politicians of every political stripe on behalf of all government levels campaign on certain educational issues, particularly school board trustees. Topics change with each municipal and provincial election and boards of education and school administrations also make decisions about learning and curriculum, as do teachers' federations.

1640

When we say the system is broken, we're all to blame. For example, in 1960 the call for change was based on what was perceived as a need for more individualization, improving self-esteem through social promotion, and less rigidity in the curricula. This call was based on public input, research studies and school board and teachers' federation recommendations. The result was an educational change culminating in the Hall-Dennis report, *Living and Learning*.

Let's be clear. I'm not criticizing that report in any way. Its conclusions and recommendations were based on research and social and political consensus at the time. Now we have the benefit of hindsight, and hindsight's 20-20. We can look back now and see clearly that it was during that period that the pendulum swung too far away from the basics and clearly established and measurable standards.

What we now know is that it was the beginning of the end of the grade step system. Children moved from grade to grade whether they were ready or not. It was called "social promotion." It was the end of standardized departmental secondary school exams. It was the beginning of the end of formalized teaching of reading, writing, grammar, spelling and phonics, although I'm told that many teachers continue to this day to teach these subjects in an informal way even though they're no longer recommended.

It was the beginning of "whole language," which, as it turns out, is not whole at all. Spelling lists were replaced with a method called "invented spelling." Primary readers were replaced with large-print whole-group stories. Oral reading and discussions were replaced with what is called "language experiences."

What started as an educational revolution to improve students' self-esteem became so loosey-goosey that the opposite occurred. Children became adults who could not read or write effectively. These adults in our workplace today will tell you that their self-esteem was affected, all right — negatively — far more than had they not been moved ahead before they were ready, particularly since the criteria for literacy have changed with the knowledge boom and computer technology.

The 1960s and 1970s wave continued into the 1980s with a move towards an integrated studies curriculum. What that meant was that such skills as memorization of times tables and learning the capitals of all the Canadian provinces became optional. Children who moved from one community to another had to start all over again.

The consistency of the curriculum and accountability were missing. Parents began to ask what the report cards meant in real terms. How did their children rank and what did they know in relationship to other children their age? Parents also began to ask about the basics and what happened to them. Too often, I'm told, when they asked questions they were minimized because they were not educators. They were told about the necessity of learning experiences, incidental learning, learning styles and multiple intelligences. Had things changed that much since they had attended school?

The interesting thing is that no matter when you went to school after the late 1960s, things changed from one generation to another. And with each successive change, we moved towards the information age of creative thinking, at the expense of leaving the basics behind, such formal subjects as reading, grammar, spelling, writing and calculation.

What that says to me is that successive governments have recognized that change was needed, but instead of reform that dealt with accountability, affordability and quality, there was a lot of tinkering around the edges.

More recently, the Sweeney report, which was commissioned by the former NDP government, was to find out how the system could be more accountable, reduce duplication and ensure quality of outcomes for its students. With that, all of us in this House can agree. I commend the former minister, Mr David Cooke, for trying to find out that whole process.

As I said at the outset, changes to educational policy and practices are affected not only by the individual



classroom teacher but also by all those who are links in the system: the researchers, the parents, parents' groups, taxpayers, board administrators, teachers' federations and politicians of all political stripes and different levels of government.

There has been much stated that the Common Curriculum assures quality and accountability. The honourable member for Windsor-Riverside stated in his message at the front of the document, "The goal of the Common Curriculum is to improve student performance by setting out clear learning expectations, along with performance standards, to help schools measure and report on student achievement."

There is absolutely nothing accountable about the outcome statements. They are so broadly stated that they are impossible to measure. For example, in the language grades 1 to 9 document it states that by the end of grade 6 "a student should be able to apply a variety of reading strategies to improve their understanding of a text." What does that mean? How can that be measured? What strategies is it referring to and what type of text? Then, by the end of grade 9, students "should be able to apply a wide variety of reading strategies to improve their understanding of a text." The exact same outcome three years later. I ask the same questions: Which strategies and what type of text?

The bottom line is that we have a system out of control in terms of affordability, accountability and quality. We all recognize that we are living in a very different and diverse society compared to the 1950s and 1960s. Certainly no one is suggesting that we go back to that time. We can't look at history through rose-coloured glasses. However, we can learn and should learn from history. We can take the best from the earlier times and combine it with the needs of the present and the future. We need to find a way to make our education system affordable and yet of the highest quality in the world. We also need to deal with equity issues and be responsive to local needs.

Rather than scaring the teachers and the students and the parents, as the opposition's doing, I'd like to see everybody involved in the education system by putting their energies into finding solutions for the 21st century. The system needs fixing, and I invite educators to be part of the process of fixing it.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I'm very pleased to join the debate today on our opposition motion demanding that the Mike Harris government stop any further reductions, cuts to elementary and secondary schools and, I think very significantly, start listening to parents, students and teachers.

The message I really want to pass across the floor to this government is that the people of this province are waking up to the reality. They are certainly not buying into the fabrications being sent around this province by the education minister in terms of the cuts not affecting the classrooms, in terms of the cuts being a very small percentage of the funding. People in this province know this and certainly the parents, teachers and students are acting.

In Thunder Bay, my colleague from Fort William and I attended a public meeting last week which well over

200 people attended. People who had never been involved in political action before are upset. They know what's happening in their children's schools. We had a remarkable meeting with 500 students last week as well. Students know what's happening. They are recognizing that these things must be stopped. The government cannot be allowed to get away with what they're getting away with.

I want to use the short time I have today to read a few words from some of the groups sending these messages to the government.

Eve Dowson, who's the chair of the Vance Chapman Elementary School Advisory Council, says:

"The Vance Chapman Elementary School Advisory Council established as one of their priorities special education and the lack of funds for this program. People of Ontario were proud of the integration and support systems for children with special needs. This resulted in a win-win situation. The child benefited, the school benefited and the community benefited. This was achieved through the development of children to the best of their ability in an integrated system that allowed them to grow and learn alongside their peers. Ontario was beginning to realize success with children with special needs. The investment of removing barriers and providing supports was resulting in a positive impact in their future. Cuts to the support system for those children is detrimental to all. Children with special needs are once again being placed at risk, a situation that would not have been tolerated as recently as one year ago. The short-sightedness of your government in this circumstance cannot be excused."

1650

I have a letter from Suzan Labine, trustee with the Lakehead Board of Education. She writes today as a trustee of the Lakehead Board of Education but also as a parent of four children who are in school, and she has very deep concerns about the education system:

"As a trustee, I am dedicated to ensuring that our students receive the best education possible, realizing the current fiscal restraints. I am also aware that a quality education for all students does have a cost. Technology, integration of special needs students, qualified staff, safe schools and equity are legitimate expectations of an education system. We must all work together using true, accurate and honest data. The future of education in Ontario depends upon the decisions you shall be making. I implore you, do not fail the children in this province."

A new group that has formed in Thunder Bay — and groups have formed all across the province — is Mothers for Education, formed in Thunder Bay by Beverley Rizzi, a remarkable woman who has gathered together a strong group of concerned parents who are beginning a very active campaign to stop this government from continuing these cuts. They have a remarkable coupon going out to all the people in our riding and across the province. Thousands of these have been sent to the Minister of Education and to the Premier imploring them and demanding that they stop the cuts. If I may, I'll read some words from her:

"We are Mothers for Education. As previously stated in various press releases and letters, we all share an



overwhelming concern over the effect of your budget cuts on our children's education system. We are comfortable in stating that we are acting as advocates for all children.

"As Mothers for Education, we believe that your government is ripping away funds from education to finance your 30% income tax reduction promise. You insist your cuts do not enter the classroom, yet eight of our elementary schools have closed their doors. We share principals between schools divided by 50 kilometres or more. We are losing special education, moving into a system relying on parent volunteers. Privacy is broken, integration by abandonment.

"What are you planning to tell the parents of these children? Librarians are becoming a thing of the past, a reflection of days gone by. Transportation and the safety of our kids is now an issue."

There is no question that the people of this province will not accept it. Quite frankly, they're as mad as hell and they're not going to take it any more.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further debate?

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I'm happy to have five or six minutes to make my comments on this motion, which I support, and I want to get right into the matter because time is very limited. I want to use this particular brochure to make the point. It was written by the Peel Board of Education, and it makes an excellent case as to where this government is at with respect to education.

**Mr Wildman:** Mr Snobelen's riding.

**Mr Marchese:** Mr Snobelen is in this riding, it's true, in that particular area of Peel.

"The government," they say, "uses fiction as an excuse to change education." They're right. That's what he does. They talk about a number of fictions, and here is fiction number one: Parents are unhappy with schools. This is what the government continually says. This board proves in terms of the number of polls that have been done that parents are not unhappy with schools and points to two in particular in Peel where 89% of the people say they're very happy and uses one Southam News/Angus Reid poll where it says, "Most Canadian taxpayers are also satisfied with public education."

The next fiction: The system is broken. The minister says often, and this government says, the system is broken. The fact, Peel says, is this: "The evidence is clear that schools are better than ever. Literacy: 97% of grade 9 students in Peel read at or above the range as set by the Ministry of Education and Training and 95% write at or above expected ranges." That's not just in Peel; it is the case throughout most of Ontario.

Fiction: By cutting administration, boards can cut millions without affecting the classroom. Mr Snobelen says this every day in the House. That's all he says. The parliamentary assistants say the same thing.

What does Peel say: "Fact: There is not enough administration in all of education to save the money the government is slashing. The minister claims that 48% of education dollars go to administration. That figure is false. Over 90% of the Peel board budget is spent on the schools; only 3.8% is spent on business and administration, including all of the trustee costs."

This figure proves that what the ministry has been talking about — the 48% of waste here and there — is false, and Peel said as much, and they elected Mr Snobelen and a lot of other fine Tories in that area of Peel.

"Fiction: Government cuts will not affect the classroom."

"Fact: By drastically reducing funding, the minister is causing local taxes to rise and student programs to be cut."

This is what Peel says. They also say this, and I agree with them: "Is dictatorship the shape of things to come?" This is Peel, where they elected people like you. They say: "Recent weeks have shown us how willing the government is to make major changes without asking elected representatives for input. Is this how the government would run a centralized school system?"

If Peel is worried, I can tell you I'm worried. Let me tell you, here are some other folks, a long list of people who are very worried, from every major newspaper.

Here's one: "According to the 1996 World Competitiveness Report, business leaders rank Canada's education system ahead of the US in terms of ability to meet the needs of a competitive economy." Do you know who said that? Mike Harris said that on September 11, 1996. Mr Snobelen said it was broken, everybody else said it was broken; Mike Harris says it's one of the best in Canada, in the world. You have to understand that the government is completely confused and contradictory about what it says on the matter of education.

Here's another one: "Education wasn't better in the good old days. Despite the constant criticism of Canadian education by politicians, our schools are the best they've ever been. They are probably the best in the world." This is the Globe and Mail, August 31, 1996.

There are a number of people, journalists and newspapers who say very much the same thing. But the minister says the system is broken and the Premier says we have one of the better systems in the world. What are you to think about the incompetence and confusion of this government?

Further, the government says, "We want to change the educational system and reform it." It's called Excellence in Education: High School Reform. Doesn't it remind you of the tenant protection package, which is designed to help the landlords but the title is designed to make it appear that they're helping tenants? It's the same with this title, Excellence in Education: High School Reform.

Do you know what? They got this very complicated book in the mail some time in mid to late September, and the parents are supposed to respond to these educational changes by the end of November. You go figure that. You, the public, who are listening, try to understand whether or not this complicated stuff I have read gives anybody any time to understand what's contained within it and what people do with it in the space of two months.

In a meeting we had at Howard school with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education, the parents and teachers who were there were livid about the lack of time they've had to respond to this document. It's shameful. It raises more questions than it does answers.

Here is the multitude of questions: "Are post-secondary institutions preparing for the double cohort, ie, those



students now in grades 7 and 8 who will graduate together from the first four-year secondary school experience?" "Can students with special needs complete diploma requirements in four years?" "The grade 11 literacy test in the OSR: What is its purpose? Whom is it helping, to give that test in grade 11?" There are many more questions that it raises, and in the space of two months how can the public and teachers and parents legitimately respond?

We have a crisis, and they're taking \$500 million out of the school system in Metro to spread out so it can help their friends with the income tax cut. That's what it's doing in Metro — \$500 million siphoned off to deal with the income tax cut to help their bank presidents. It's shameful.

I support this motion and I hope the people of Ontario see through all this sham.

1700

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** I'm pleased to participate today in the Liberal opposition day number 4. I actually have read with some understanding the actual motion by the Leader of the Opposition. She's trying to make a point here, although struggling. I look at it and I sort of say to myself that I could agree if there was really some kind of direction here. Perhaps I would agree if she was encouraging the boards, directing them to be more accountable and more fiscal, but I always look at it from a background and I want to address my comments today with that in mind.

I'm just going to read from a document here: "We should really improve — a core education program with clear standards that are tested." Yes, I think we should do that; I would agree with that. "Publish spending guidelines for school administration. Cap trustees' salaries and reduce the number of trustees." I would agree with that. By the way, I'm reading from the original Liberal plan booklet. In fact we're doing much of what is in here. "Establish local school councils, volunteer parents, community leaders, students and teachers," all of which really is very central to much of what our changes are all about.

I believe that the people of Ontario knew much of the material in this book was a plan very much copied from a plan that's going to work.

If we look at the background, I think the ministry has a vision and a plan — that's most important — to achieve an educational system based on excellence, student achievement, affordability and accountability for Ontario parents and taxpayers. There are centres of excellence. Certainly in my riding of Durham East there are centres of excellence, like the Durham Board of Education. There are excellent teachers, for example, Harvey Webster, a teacher who was recently recognized by our board as an excellent lifelong dedicated teacher, and certainly excellent students — a young student I was privileged to give the Governor General's award to, studying engineering at Queen's University. There are a lot of very excellent examples throughout Ontario of students, teachers and indeed boards, the Durham Board of Education most recently getting the Bertelsmann award.

Let's keep in mind education is all about children. My riding of Durham East has five boards of education plus

a Christian school component which has two elementary and a secondary school, all with volunteer boards. I would agree that they're probably contributing fine students and fine citizens to our communities.

That's the background. This isn't really something where we have to look at making fundamental change. Why are we making changes? Really the changes are a result of about five to 10 years of serious mismanagement. Right now we've taken our children and we've not only eliminated their future, we've handed each one of them about an \$8,700 debt. That's their share of the \$100-billion deficit which was doubled in the last five years — complete irresponsible government. We spend more money on the interest on our debt than we do on education.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Saving the money for the rich. Give them a tax cut.

**Mr O'Toole:** I think the fundamentals of the economics clearly indicate that we had to address the way we were doing things in Ontario. Mr Bradley over there is saying that their answer is always to spend more money. You know, if I look at the example set by — the federal Liberal government is downloading about \$1.2 billion to health care in Ontario. In fact they're reducing the funding to education and OTAB. We're trying to do more with less.

I think if we look at much more of the background of this, there's a wide series of debate. There will be other members on our side who will be trying to get the information out. This year the people of Ontario will spend about \$13 billion educating elementary and secondary students. This money pays for the 1.9 million students enrolled in 5,200 schools of learning under the direction of some 120,000 teachers. So we're dealing with a very large system and it's really not fair to compare our jurisdiction to other provinces, because we're a very large part of Canada. Certainly we're twice the size of any other provincial jurisdiction.

But when I look across the issue of education in Canada today, I just want to read a quote here and then I'll play a little quiz with you. You can guess who said it. How's that? Sort of like a whodunit.

**Mr Wildman:** Is this a test?

**Mr O'Toole:** Yes, it's a test. This goes on. I am quoting here from a document: "I had the audacity to stand up and say that education in Canada was in crisis and needed to be studied and reported on. I got unanimous support on my motion." By the way, these are from the debates that were held this past summer —

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Who said that?

**Mr O'Toole:** Who said it? It was Senator Lorne Bonnell. In fact, this document I'm reading from now is from "Roundtable on Restructuring Education." This forum was conducted in 1996 at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Winnipeg. One of the commenters — I try to read his articles all the time in the *Globe and Mail* — is William Thorsell, editor in chief of the *Globe and Mail*, speaking at this meeting. I'm going to quote what he said. He said:

"I have long arrogantly assumed that standards of literacy, numeracy and knowledge of such things as history, geography and literature have declined since I



graduated from high school in 1963. On reviewing some of the recent literature, I am surprised to find that my assumptions about this are pretty accurate. I find that after 10 years in school, 44% of young people between the ages of 16 and 24 are functionally innumerate and almost 30% are functionally illiterate. That is defined by their ability to understand a comparatively simple newspaper article." This again is done by William Thorsell. He's the education editor of the *Globe and Mail*.

Furthermore, the comments I found when you look at education across Canada are there are some common complaints or common concerns. What people really want is a system to deliver a much higher outcome and they want much higher and clearer standards. That's clear in every province. They want clarity in the standards and clarity in the measurement of those standards, and equity and access.

I'm going to quote here from a couple of other people, because I think we're looking at this too narrowly, if we're looking at Ontario, without taking into consideration what has been said in other parts of Canada. For example, there was Mr Shariff from Alberta, a former teacher and social worker. His comment is:

"I found a common thread in clients who were perpetually relegated to the status of poverty. It was a lack of education and social skills," much of which is dismissed in our school system today. "Some studies indicate that any child born after 1964 may go through five to eight career changes in a lifetime." So education has to be modernized and updated to meet the challenges of a changing work world.

I could go on. There are some other comments in here that I think I'd like to share with the viewers today or those participating in the debate. There is a very definite common thrust that they want the curriculum to get back to basics. So in fact our Minister of Education has a series of initiatives that are trying to focus on quality in education. We're all hearing that word. I just mentioned it was the central theme in this legislative committee that met in Winnipeg.

Provincial-wide testing: That's been instituted. Education Quality and Accountability Office: That's been instituted. Technology investments: We've done that with the TIPS program. We've doubled the funding in that area. Accountability both in the profession and in the outcomes: We did that with Bill 31, the College of Teachers. So there have been significant changes to ensure the quality of education.

A further consideration the ministry put forward is the secondary school reform, which was referred to by the previous speaker, and all parents and students and schools are given the opportunity to feed back. The parliamentary assistant, Tony Skarica, is travelling among the province to gather input from parents, students and teachers. In fact, tonight he's in Scarborough. For those viewing, he'll be in Scarborough tonight in Mr Newman's riding.

1710

Actually, last week, in constituency week, I had a round table on education meeting. At that meeting I had current teachers, retired teachers, the president of the student council for Bowmanville High School, regular parents, a former head of the school board. By the way,

Mr Strike, who was the head of the school board in our area at that time, was —

**Mr Wildman:** Strike? I thought you were going to eliminate that.

**Mr O'Toole:** That was another bill.

In fact, he was the head of the board at the time they went through the last reorganization, in 1968. In 1968 we ended up changing from approximately 1,500 school boards down to the approximately 165 that exist today. Going back to 1968, that was a very significant change at that time. I think we're at the same time of looking at how to clear out the money and waste and duplication in administration.

I'm running out of time. I want to save the rest of the time I've got. There's one more point I want to make. To those people looking today, we want equity in education. If you think of a typical classroom with 25 students in it and each student was to get \$6,000, that would amount to \$150,000 per classroom. If we take out \$50,000 for the teacher and let's say \$25,000 out for transportation — that's \$100 per month per child — and take out \$25,000 for maintenance and heating and all the rest of it, you've still got \$50,000 left. Where's the money gone? We've paid the teacher; we've paid for the building. Where's the money gone? I think we've started it all wrong.

If you take a typical school community with 500 students with \$6,000 per student, that's a budget for that school of \$3 million. The problem today is that we're starting at the top with the boards of education with \$140 million or \$150 million, and they're telling us there's nothing left for the classroom. I put the question to you that these changes are putting the dollars in the classroom. That's what we said in the Common Sense document. The boards were given the chance to do it. They didn't do it, and we're going to.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** In the short time I have, I would like to bring this back to a reality check. In my 30 years in education, certainly I've seen many changes in education, many, many reforms. But this has to be the first time I think I can liken education reform to a runaway train, with students and taxpayers in the path of destruction.

The Minister of Education and Training clearly has no apparent plan for education. He has no vision for the way things have to be changed to make them more effective. What we have to do is to slow this whole thing down before we crash as an educational system.

Where's the involvement of the providers, of the stakeholders? Where's the involvement of the taxpayer, of the trustee? Issues of education have to be prioritized, and that's not happening. This government has to put important things first in education. It needs to take time to ensure that the right changes are made but that they're done in the right way.

What's happened across Ontario to date with the \$400 million in cuts to education, which really when you compound it is like \$800 million, is that class sizes have increased. Clearly class sizes all over Ontario have increased. There is less resource time. So children at the various spectrums in education, especially the two extremes, the gifted and those requiring special education, suffer. Principals are now teaching. They are not in their



offices being able to counsel children, being able to provide guidance to parents, to teachers and to children. There is more time required for teachers to prepare materials, less time for teachers to work with children.

You know what? We must always remember that we must educate the total child. We cannot educate only one or two components of children. We must take the total child and we must ensure that education happens globally and totally for children.

I'd like to take the example of just one school that I referred to earlier, and I'd like to go through the student population. The grade 1 and 2 classroom has 30 students, with two exceptionalities; the grade 3 and 4 classroom split has 30 students, with six exceptionalities; the grade 4 and 5 class has 31 students, with 14 exceptionalities. The grade 5-6 class has 30 students, with 12 exceptionalities. The grade 7 class has 36 students, with 10 exceptionalities. The grade 8 class has 29 students, with 13 exceptionalities. Ladies and gentlemen, all those classrooms are taught by the teacher only. All the support staff has gone. School boards can't afford it.

Let's spend a few seconds talking about high school reform. The curriculum in high school is going to be drastically altered by this particular government. What you are going to see is credit courses going from 110 hours to 90 hours. You're going to be reducing the compulsory time for the study of English from 580 hours to as little as 360 hours. Is that preparing the total child, the total student, for the real world?

Probably the thing that is really disconcerting to the people of the Sudbury region is that you don't understand the importance of this education of the total child, because you're de-emphasizing many very valuable subjects, such as the creative arts and physical education. I have literally hundreds of letters from students in Sudbury asking the Minister of Education: "Why are you doing that? Do you not understand that these programs help us to become the type of citizen any government should want for the future citizenry of Ontario?"

I've asked the government to reconsider some of its directions, because clearly in education they're wrong. Let me quote from a few parents in the 45 seconds I have left. Ron Tough: "I see a deterioration of educational service." Cathy Martikineen: "I'm a young parent and I'll fight with everything I have to make sure my two young children have quality education — this government doesn't believe in quality" education. Elizabeth Spry: "We've got a child in high school and a child in elementary school. I pity the teachers — they're overworked, underresourced and the boards can't do anything about it because this government has taken so much away from education." Finally, Bill Nurmi: "Where's the quality classroom this government promised? They snowed us. A snow job by Snobelen."

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I am pleased to be able to take part in this debate today because what the government is doing to Ontario's educational system and what the government is trying to do to Ontario's educational system in terms of trying to extract billions of dollars from it is absolutely the worst thing that could happen to our educational system at this juncture in our history and absolutely the wrong direction to be moving in at this juncture in our history.

I want to comment a bit on that. It's very interesting that during the summer when the Premier went to Germany, to France and to Great Britain to talk to the business sector in those jurisdictions, what he said was that Ontario has an excellent education system, Ontario has a well-trained workforce, and he said to people in those jurisdictions that that is one of the reasons they ought to come to Ontario to invest: a good education system that's been in place for many years and a well-trained workforce that is a product of that education system.

It's interesting that the Premier acknowledges that a succession of governments over the years has built up in Ontario a good education system, an education system that has provided for a well-trained and productive workforce. It's interesting that that is the setting we have now. The Premier has acknowledged that.

1720

What's also interesting is that if you read anything that talks about the economy we're entering into, the so-called knowledge economy, what is said over and over again is that, if anything, jurisdictions around the world will have to find ways to invest even more in things like education and training and to invest money in education and training which, if anything, will further uplift the skill, the knowledge, the base of learning that people carry with them through their lives. Everyone who looks at that 21st century economy acknowledges that jurisdictions which are able to have and to consistently fund a strong education and training system will have a decided advantage in that new and developing economy.

Over time, anyone who studies education acknowledges that learning, that the acquiring of skills, the development of analytical thinking, the capacity to question, to think critically, all of these things are tied at some point in someone's educational development to the size of classroom, to how many children are in a classroom, to how much individual attention they receive, to how much interaction there is between teacher and student, how much interaction there is back and forth between students. Everyone acknowledges that. Study after study has confirmed it. Study after study has confirmed that if you want to uplift the standards, if you want to uplift the results that you get in your education system, these are the things you must pay attention to: the size of the classroom, the quality of interaction in the classroom, the amount of special assistance and help that students receive. If you're dealing with reading, in many cases children develop their reading ability at different rates, different times. All children may at some point in their educational development require extra help, special help, unique approaches. That's all out there. It's all in the educational research. That's the background I think we need to acknowledge.

The Premier said when he went to Europe that we have had in Ontario a first-rate education system; we have a well-trained, productive workforce. Then he comes back here and we find the Minister of Education, who took almost \$1 billion out of the system last year — he tried to couch it in terms of saying, "Well, it's only \$400 million," but it's \$400 million taken out halfway through the year, so annualized it comes out to at least \$800



million. When you add on some of the other incidental cuts, it's about \$1 billion. Now we see the Minister of Education talking about a further \$1 billion.

We've brought into this Legislature day after day after day examples: 38 children in a grade 1 classroom. Anyone who has spent any time in a classroom knows that 38 children in a grade 1 classroom is a completely unmanageable situation. By the end of grade 1, every child is supposed to be able to read, and a grade 1 teacher simply will not have the time to work with every child in a classroom that has that many children. It's physically impossible.

We have examples where you've got 40 children in a grade 6 or a grade 7 classroom and the teacher acknowledges that many of those children have special needs, but there is no resource there to help in terms of special needs, and that teacher herself or himself is simply too overtaxed in terms of time to be able to give that special attention.

What we've got happening here is that at the very time when we need good investment in education, at the very time when we need thoughtful investment in education, at the very time when we need to be looking at smaller classes, more additional help in the classroom, more attention to reading resources, libraries and those sorts of things, we've got a Minister of Education who goes across the province and his sole objective is to extract as much as he can out of education. We've got a Minister of Education who is not being driven by an educational agenda; he is being driven by a financial agenda: Take as much money as you can out of the education system to pass it on to the corporate friends of this government. Take money from children in order that the president of the Bank of Montreal can get a \$200,000 tax cut.

The government members go back to their constituencies and babble on, go through the deficit-and-debt mantra: "We've got to do these things because it has to do with removing this burden. If we don't remove this burden, our children won't have the opportunity."

Well, let's cut to the quick, let's cut right through it. The burden being put on children in this jurisdiction is that this government is depriving them of the education they will need to be well positioned in that knowledge economy we're moving into. That is the burden that's being placed on children, the burden that's being placed on children across this province, and this government is solely responsible. The fact of the matter is that money is being extracted out of education by this Minister of Education in order to redistribute wealth, resources and income to the wealthiest people in this province.

Children are going to classrooms where they're not getting the attention they need, children are being put in larger and larger classrooms, children aren't getting the special help they need, children are not getting the reading resources they need in order that this government can redistribute income to the wealthiest people in this province. That is what this phoney tax scheme is all about. That is how that phoney tax scheme is affecting the education of children all across this province.

I don't know why the government doesn't come clean, just come clean and admit it. I don't know why they don't just come right out and say to people, "Look, we

are more interested in redistributing money, wealth and power to those people who already have a lot than we're interested in the education of children." Just be honest about it.

Anybody who looks at the data, anybody who looks at the transfers — "take money out of education and give money to bankers" — comes to that conclusion. The government is not fooling anybody. The government, by repeating over and over again their silly mantra, is not adding to the debate in the province. They're not going to fool people any longer. Why don't you just come out and admit it? Then there can be an honest and open, clear debate in the province about what direction we ought to move in. Then we can have a real debate about how money ought to be spent on education, where those resources ought to be placed, what the priorities ought to be. Should the priorities be in terms of improving the standards of high school students? Should the priorities be in terms of elementary education? Should the priorities be somewhere else? None of these things get on the agenda with this government, none of these things manage to be discussed, because the government is so committed, so obsessed with taking money away from education so they can transfer it to their wealthy friends.

We want to say, in the closing minutes of this debate, that a Conservative government about 25 years ago, 30 years ago — but it was a much different Conservative government than your stripe. They were Progressive Conservatives; they were not Republicans, as you people are. Progressive Conservatives actually sat down and made investments in Ontario's education system. In fact, they went out and borrowed money to make those investments because they recognized what a productive investment education is, that by developing a better university system, by developing a better community college system, by improvements in the elementary system and the secondary system we could enhance the skills, the knowledge and the ability of a broad base of Ontario residents and that would position us well to be productive through the 1970s, the 1980s and into the 1990s.

Oh, how I wish this government had a vision even remotely like that. Oh, how I wish we had a government that had a vision for education rather than just a vision for tax cuts for the wealthy.

1730

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** I'm pleased to rise this afternoon and participate in this debate on education. I want to set the record straight on a couple of issues that have been mentioned this afternoon that weren't exactly as they are, one about our reduction in funding to special education. In actual fact, we have not reduced funding to special education. The other was about comments made by the Premier when he was overseas about the quality of education in Canada. I'm sure, if I remember the record properly, they were in relation to North America, not the world. I just want to set the record straight on that.

It's interesting that the leader of the third party would make the suggestion that we borrow some more money — an interesting issue. I believe the two previous parties in government totally exhausted all those possibilities by



running up \$100 billion in debt, so borrowing more money is totally not an option any more.

The resolution from the leader of the official opposition states at the end — she calls on the Mike Harris government to “bring forward policies and initiatives that are guided by the best interest of children.” I could not agree with her more. As a matter of fact, I think that particular issue should be the driving force behind everything we do in education. We have to remember our education system exists for the students; it does not exist to provide employment for those people working in it.

Now that the leader of the official opposition and I agree on the purpose of education, let's look at the track record over the last little while.

Let's look at the College of Teachers, an independent, professional, self-regulating body responsible for the governance of the teaching profession. I have to believe that the establishment of this college elevates teachers to the professional status they deserve. It's difficult for me to understand why members of the opposition were not overwhelmingly supportive of this initiative. I believe that the College of Teachers, which may not be in the best interests of the teacher federations, is most certainly in the best interests of children and our teachers.

Education Quality and Accountability Office: This particular function will provide province-wide testing for all students in grades 3 and 11 and random testing in grades 6 and 9. The results gathered from these tests will allow for recommendations to the government for improvement of the education system and student performance. Again, this legislation, which is obviously in the best interests of students, was not supported by the members opposite.

Standardized curriculum: It seems to me that everyone would agree, at least in the core subjects, that a standard curriculum for all schools across the province is in the best interests of all students. In addition to the substantial cost saving associated with removing this task from each board, our increasingly mobile society will know what to expect from the school curriculum in each area of the province.

Grade 13, or whatever else you choose to call it: Completing high school in four years, as all other provinces do and as most other areas of the world do, in fact, is most definitely in the best interests of students. Our students in Ontario are certainly as smart as anywhere else in the world; our teachers are certainly as effective. Why would the opposition be so upset about eliminating the fifth year of high school? I think we should respect the fact that we have good students and good teachers and have a four-year secondary school program.

General education development testing, which allows students to write an exam to qualify for high school equivalency, and an additional \$20 million invested in technology and an incentive partnership program designed to foster partnerships and advance integration of information technology: Both these issues, by any standard of measurement, are in the best interests of our students. Junior kindergarten funded the same way as every other grade in school makes sense to me.

So you see, as one member on this government's side, the motion by the member for Thunder Bay reflects some

contradictions. Several initiatives, as I have outlined, introduced by this government are guided solely by the best interests of the children, yet they've not been supported by the member and her colleagues. She now brings forward a motion calling on the Mike Harris government to “bring forward policies and initiatives that are guided by the best interest of children.” I'm confused.

I'd like to talk a little bit, in the time I have left, about the member for Sudbury saying, “Let's slow things down.” A typical Liberal answer: “Let's slow things down.” I've got to tell you that in my area of the province, Kent county, slowing things down is not an option.

I had an opportunity last week to spend some time in the classroom at the Victor Lauriston school with its wonderful principal, Anne Pegg. I have to compliment the school and the tremendous attitude of its teachers and students.

In Kent county we've been underfunded for years, and because of that we've had to be more efficient. But our students graduate and they compete. They're very effective at competing at universities and colleges and for employment opportunities with students educated in boards that have per-pupil costs 60% higher than ours.

Also for your information, in our county of Kent we have three Christian schools. They educate and graduate students at a substantially lower cost than our public and separate boards do and they also go on to compete. So you see that money doesn't make all the difference.

For several years our educational system has required major reform in the best interests of the children. Previous governments have avoided reform. They had studies and studies and then did nothing.

Minister Snobelen said this afternoon that education was too important to be politicized, and I agree with him. Education is the backbone of the future of our province. The system doesn't need more money. The taxpayers of Ontario are tapped out. They do not have any more money to spend on the system. If students educated in one system at a fraction of the price of another system all go out and compete, then we have to look and say: “Money is not the answer. The system requires some major restructuring.”

I would like to encourage the members opposite and all the teachers' federations, teachers and educators to work along with the government to help us design a system we can all be proud of, that will serve us well, so that in the future we can genuinely say we have the best educational system in the world.

**Mr Bradley:** The first initiative that John Snobelen, as Minister of Education and Training, took in this province was to create a crisis — I might add a phoney crisis — and that particular comment was caught on tape. Ever since then we've had a minister bent on disruption and disarray in education, in a system which has evolved over the years through the development of consensus. He takes pleasure, it seems to me, in intimidating people, in provoking confrontation rather than creating consensus. We all know that the best way of developing good policy is through consensus and consultation, not simply by supreme edict of a Minister of Education.

Make no mistake about it, though: The author of this disruption is not John Snobelen. The author of the



education policy of this government is Mike Harris, the Premier of this province, and his advisers, the Republican guard, as they call them, who worship at the altar of Newt Gingrich and other Republicans in the south, the extreme right of the south.

1740

The real agenda of this government was probably revealed in St Catharines, and I say so anecdotally, on the same day Dianne Cunningham, the member for London North, the education critic, was in St Catharines speaking to the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation: a very moderate speech, a conciliatory speech, a very thoughtful speech. I think a lot of people were impressed by it and should have been. The same day, speaking to the Rotary Club in St Catharines, was none other than the leader of the Conservative Party, Mike Harris, using insulting terminology to describe educators and people involved in education, in keeping with the fact that this government, or at least many members of this government, simply don't like anybody who is associated with the public sector.

We're seeing hundreds of millions of dollars already cut from education and hundreds of millions more likely to be cut from education. Why are they doing it? They're doing it to finance their crazy tax scheme, a tax scheme which will cut taxes for the richest people in our province to their greatest benefit, and will cost money. This is a Conservative government — I emphasize Conservative government — that is going to borrow money to give us a tax break. It makes no sense at all. Surely if the problem in this province is the deficit, as the government would contend, they wouldn't borrow more money. They're going to put us, according to the Common Sense Revolution, \$20 billion more into debt to finance a tax scheme. It makes no sense at all. Even small-c conservatives in this province are shaking their heads at this particular prospect.

But what this government has been doing is cutting in all areas of education. The strategy is to intimidate; the strategy is to divide and conquer. They are pitting people who believe in junior kindergarten against those who believe in adult education, school board against school board, teachers against school boards, trustees against teachers. There were 200,000 people out here, many of them interested in education, who were demonstrating against that.

But you have to pin the tail on the donkey. That's a child's game, pinning the tail on the donkey, and the donkey is the Harris government. Don't get people blaming one another. Don't be intimidating them into silence. The people who are the author of this problem reside in the government caucus and particularly in the Premier's office.

So we have larger, crowded classes. We have fewer resources. The special needs of special children in the system cannot be met with the kind of cuts you're making. Junior kindergarten is being abolished at the very time when the experts in the field, such as Dr Fraser Mustard, eminently respected, are saying that's when you need this kind of intervention. Now you want to take away the local input. You want to take away local boards of education, boards that people can get at. They can't

get at the Ministry of Education. They can get at the local board of education, however, and make any changes or alterations they want.

The directors of education had a press conference this week at which they offered to be participants in change in Ontario and bringing about the kind of changes you want. The message from the people out there is clear: You are moving too quickly and too drastically without taking into consideration the consequences of what you are doing. People across the education sector are prepared to sit down with government and work with them, but you're more interested in creating a crisis and disruption than you are in creating a consensus.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Further debate?

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I welcome the opportunity to provide some observations on the debate today. I thought there was good debate. There were some very thoughtful points that were made. It seems to me, though, that the evidence is conclusive. The evidence that was presented, not just a point of view but the evidence from people who know something about education — and I'd like to refer to parents at this particular point, parents who have in the last recent number of weeks been mobilizing around this province. They receive more calls than ever from parents who are concerned. As you well know, it takes a while for policies and strategies of government to kick in. Well, it's kicking in. I would say to my colleagues on the other side, you must be experiencing this as well, that indeed you must be receiving calls from students and from parents, particularly parents.

It seems to me that I've heard at different times: "Teachers' federations; well, what do you expect?"

**Mr Baird:** They're really unions.

**Mr Patten:** "They're really unions," says the member. "They have a vested interest." The trustees have a vested interest, because I suppose they receive a degree of remuneration as well.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Patten:** The students? Well, I haven't heard too much discussion about the students, but I believe the government should listen very, very carefully to the parents.

I'd like to acknowledge that there are four parents here from a small community called Nottawa. That's not Ottawa, but Nottawa. It is a fine community. It has a strong sense of social responsibility. These parents have been here for seven hours today. Why are they here today? Because they care about their children, they care about their school and they care about the students who are being affected because their school is in dire straits. It needs some support. It was a victim of the freeze. The freeze of course, as we know, was the reason to try to find \$400 million — it was \$167 million — to try and find money to take out of education.

I would like to come back to some of the statements that parents make, because I know on the government side they expect, "Well, the opposition just whines and no matter what we do, they complain." I want to provide some testimony of what parents are saying. Some of these parents, by the way, are in your ridings and you should take note of what they say.

I would like to address an issue that was raised by the member for Durham East. He said, about our motion put



forward by our leader today, "There were no recommendations or alternatives or suggestions as to what could be done." Then he read a few examples of where, in the last campaign, out of our red book, some of the areas where you may find resources. You were absolutely correct. You didn't complete reading the passage in the book, because what you would have found was that our policy was to put a freeze on education for four years, work with the system, find some resources and then put them back and keep them in the system for enhancing the classroom and for enhancing junior kindergarten and early childhood education within the system. By the way, we are hearing people say that policy looks not too bad today.

But that's not what is happening. I hear very few members on the opposite side talk about what is going to happen to the resource that is found out of possible waste. You never answer that question. You just say, "We're going to deal with waste." Many parents believe that what you're talking about is streamlining administration and then taking that resource and putting it back somehow within the system, but that's not what you're doing. It's not what you're doing.

Almost every speaker today has referred in one way or another to funding that \$5.5-billion tax break which you refuse to acknowledge or even mention because you know it adds to your deficit. It's not even progressive — the Progressive Conservatives — because the richer you are, the more money you'll get back. Someone in the low-income or the middle-income category gets a menial amount of money of a couple of hundred dollars here or there. If they have one student who's going to a college or a university, it is wiped out — a \$400 increase, \$500 increase.

**Mr Baird:** You raised my tuition, Richard.

**Mr Patten:** Look at that. Look at that.

I would like to read a few quotes from —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Patten:** Mr Speaker, it's hard to —

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Nepean.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Sit down. Government members, it's difficult to hear the member speaking. I'm not going to allow the —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon, it's difficult to tell the government members that it's hard to hear them when you're in the middle of heckling. It's difficult to hear. I'd appreciate it if you could keep it down. There are four minutes left in his presentation. I'd appreciate it if I could hear it.

1750

**Mr Patten:** I would like to share some thoughts from some parents. A concerned parent, Sharon Preston of Fort Frances, wrote a letter:

"We are desperately concerned about what the cuts to education have done to our classrooms in the northern parts of Ontario. We do not have the flexibility to absorb such cuts. We have lost our guidance and library teachers. Music is done by the classroom teacher, as are phys ed and art. Our special education is being cut back. Our classes are larger. More cuts will be devastating and

the children seem to have been forgotten in this whole picture."

That addresses an issue that the member for Durham East had mentioned before, and that was the teacher's salary in a classroom. We all know, for gosh sakes, that today a classroom is made up of more than just the one teacher in that particular classroom. In our multicultural society in Ontario, we know that there need to be English-as-a-second-language specialists, counsellors who work with the families who are new to Canada. It is indeed more expensive to operate an educational system in Ontario, but there are good reasons for it. I don't hear those good reasons for it.

You cannot — and I would like to debate this with any member — relate the demography of Ontario to the demography of PEI or the demography of Saskatchewan or Alberta. That is not a pejorative statement; that is simply to say that the makeup of the communities is decidedly different, which places different demands on our particular educational system by virtue of the demographics of our particular province. That is reflected in a higher cost. Our salaries are higher, our cost of living is higher, hence we have a more expensive system on a relative basis. It is not, when you take into consideration those factors.

A concerned parent, Al Chambers, also chair of the Ottawa Board of Education's parent advisory committee, says estimates of Harris's education finance reform will result in a cut of at least \$50 million in the Ottawa board's budget, forcing a 32% increase in class size in inner-school cities, the loss of junior kindergarten, the closing of its adult high schools, the loss of programs for disadvantaged children.

I have hundreds of letters that I would be very happy to share, especially with the members on the other side because they come from your ridings. Maybe that's what I should do, send them to you, but they've been writing to me as opposition education critic because they find they're not being listened to, that somehow there isn't the sense of responsiveness to their concerns.

I would like to end my comments, because I only have 56 seconds, by commenting on the Crombie report, which I believe is very close to what the government will do. I can't say for sure; I hope they won't, on some things. That particular report, in the final analysis, will weaken the strength of local participation to have a voice in education. They'll still have a voice, but they will not have any economic clout. If taxpayers think they're going to pay anything less for education because they're now only going to be paying 5%, as proposed, they have another think coming, because that educational tax will now be a transportation or a transit tax. Do they want to trade that off, not having a strong voice in education versus dealing with their transit or transportation system?

I'm very proud to support the motion as presented by our leader today and I hope that all the members will support it as well.

ROYAL ASSENT  
SANCTION ROYALE

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Before we put the question on Ms McLeod's opposition day motion, I

would like to inform the House that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to two bills in his chambers.

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller):** The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 75, An Act to regulate alcohol and gaming in the public interest, to fund charities through the responsible management of video lotteries and to amend certain statutes related to alcohol and gaming / *Projet de loi 75, Loi réglementant les alcools et les jeux dans l'intérêt public, prévoyant le financement des organismes de bienfaisance grâce à la gestion responsable des loteries vidéo et modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait aux alcools et aux jeux*

Bill 76, An Act to improve environmental protection, increase accountability and enshrine public consultation in the Environmental Assessment Act / *Projet de loi 76, Loi visant à améliorer la protection de l'environnement, à accroître l'obligation de rendre des comptes et à intégrer la consultation publique à la Loi sur les évaluations environnementales.*

#### EDUCATION FINANCING (continued)

**The Speaker:** Mrs McLeod has moved opposition day number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1756 to 1801.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	Miclash, Frank
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard

Brown, Michael A.	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, Elinor	Hoy, Pat	Pouliot, Gilles
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Cleary, John C.	Marchese, Rosario	Wildman, Bud
Conway, Sean G.	Martin, Tony	Wood, Len
Crozier, Bruce	McLeod, Lyn	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Palladini, Al
Baird, John R.	Harnick, Charles	Parker, John L.
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Pettit, Trevor
Bassett, Isabel	Hodgson, Chris	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Boushy, Dave	Hudak, Tim	Ross, Lillian
Brown, Jim	Johns, Helen	Runciman, Robert W.
Carr, Gary	Johnson, Bert	Sampson, Rob
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, David	Shea, Derwyn
Chudleigh, Ted	Jordan, W. Leo	Sheehan, Frank
DeFaria, Carl	Kells, Morley	Smith, Bruce
Doyle, Ed	Klees, Frank	Snobelen, John
Ecker, Janet	Leach, Al	Spina, Joseph
Elliott, Brenda	Leadston, Gary L.	Sterling, Norman W.
Eves, Ernie L.	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
Fisher, Barbara	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Fox, Gary	Maves, Bart	Tilson, David
Froese, Tom	Munro, Julia	Turnbull, David
Galt, Doug	Murdoch, Bill	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob
Grimmett, Bill	O'Toole, John	Young, Terence H.
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 26; the nays are 62.

**The Speaker:** The motion is lost.

It now being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1805.*



# CONTENTS

Tuesday 19 November 1996

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Family support plan</b>	
Mr Gravelle .....	5165
<b>Fire safety</b>	
Mr Kormos .....	5165
<b>J.J. Robinette</b>	
Mr Tilson .....	5165
<b>School bus safety</b>	
Mr Hoy .....	5166
<b>TVOntario</b>	
Mr Len Wood .....	5166
<b>Job creation</b>	
Mr Jordan .....	5166
<b>Video lottery terminals</b>	
Mr Bradley .....	5166
<b>Workers' compensation</b>	
Mr Christopherson .....	5166
<b>Kiwanis Club of Peterborough</b>	
Mr Stewart .....	5167

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Parole system</b>	
Mr Runciman .....	5167
Mr Ramsay .....	5167
Mr Bradley .....	5168
Mrs Boyd .....	5168

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Economic statement</b>	
Mr Kennedy .....	5171
Mr Eves .....	5171
<b>Highway safety</b>	
Mr Kennedy .....	5171
Mr Palladini .....	5172
<b>Attorney General's comments</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	5172
Mr Harnick .....	5172
<b>Hospital restructuring</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	5173
Mr Wilson .....	5173
<b>Education financing</b>	
Mr Patten .....	5174
Mr Snobelen .....	5174
<b>Services for abused women</b>	
Ms Churley .....	5175
Mrs Ecker .....	5175
<b>Environmental Web site</b>	
Mr O'Toole .....	5175
Mr Sterling .....	5175
<b>Students with special needs</b>	
Mr Bartolucci .....	5175
Mr Snobelen .....	5176
<b>Services for the disabled</b>	
Mr Silipo .....	5176
Ms Mushinski .....	5176

## Assistance to farmers

Mr Carroll .....	5177
Mr Villeneuve .....	5177
<b>Highway safety</b>	
Mr Colle .....	5177
Mr Palladini .....	5177
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Ms Martel .....	5178
Mr Harnick .....	5178
Mr Cooke .....	5178

## MOTIONS

<b>Committee substitutions</b>	
Mr David Johnson .....	5179
Agreed to .....	5179
<b>Private members' public business</b>	
Mr David Johnson .....	5179
Agreed to .....	5179
<b>Committee sittings</b>	
Mr David Johnson .....	5179
Mrs Caplan .....	5179
Mr Wildman .....	5179
Agreed to .....	5179

## PETITIONS

<b>School bus safety</b>	
Mr Hoy .....	5180
<b>Occupational health and safety</b>	
Mr Christopherson .....	5180, 5181
Mr Bartolucci .....	5182
<b>Public libraries</b>	
Mr Grimmett .....	5180
<b>School boards</b>	
Mr North .....	5180
<b>Workers' compensation</b>	
Mr Christopherson .....	5180, 5182
<b>Firearms control</b>	
Mr Murdoch .....	5181
<b>School accommodation</b>	
Mr Patten .....	5181
<b>Transfer payments</b>	
Mr Newman .....	5181
<b>Drinking and driving</b>	
Mr Baird .....	5182
<b>Nursing staff</b>	
Mrs Caplan .....	5182

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Good Financial Management Act,</b>	
<b>1996, Bill 93, Mr Eves</b>	
Mr Eves .....	5183
Agreed to .....	5183
<b>Child and Family Services</b>	
<b>Amendment Act, 1996,</b>	
<b>Bill 94, Mr Gerretsen</b>	
Mr Gerretsen .....	5183
Agreed to .....	5183

## OPPOSITION DAY

<b>Education financing, opposition day</b>	
<b>motion number 4, Mrs McLeod</b>	
Mrs McLeod .....	5183
Mr Wildman .....	5185
Mr Young .....	5187
Mr Micalash .....	5189
Ms Churley .....	5190
Mr Froese .....	5190
Mr Gravelle .....	5192
Mr Marchese .....	5193
Mr O'Toole .....	5194
Mr Bartolucci .....	5195
Mr Hampton .....	5196
Mr Carroll .....	5197
Mr Bradley .....	5198
Mr Patten .....	5199
Negated .....	5201

## ROYAL ASSENT

The Lieutenant Governor .....	5200
-------------------------------	------

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Visitors</b>	
The Speaker .....	5167
<b>Alfred Cowling</b>	
Mr Shea .....	5169
Mr Colle .....	5170
Mr Silipo .....	5170
The Speaker .....	5171
<b>Written questions</b>	
Mr Agostino .....	5179
The Speaker .....	5179

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 19 novembre 1996

## PÉTITIONS

<b>Jeu télédiffusé</b>	
M. Lalonde .....	5180

## PREMIÈRE LECTURE

<b>Loi de 1996 sur la bonne</b>	
<b>gestion des finances publiques</b>	
projet de loi 93, <b>M. Eves</b>	
Adoptée .....	5183
<b>Loi de 1996 modifiant la Loi</b>	
<b>sur les services à l'enfance et</b>	
<b>à la famille</b>	
projet de loi 94, <b>M. Gerretsen</b>	
Adoptée .....	5183

## SANCTION ROYALE

Le lieutenant-gouverneur .....	5200
--------------------------------	------



No. 125

N° 125

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

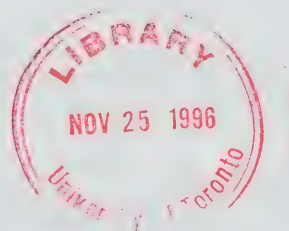
Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 20 November 1996

Mercredi 20 novembre 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service

3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W

Toronto ON M7A 1A2

Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats

3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest

Toronto ON M7A 1A2

Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430

Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 20 November 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 20 novembre 1996

*The House met at 1331.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** Today we are joined by firefighters from throughout Ontario, including those from the city of North York, who have gathered here to express their concern about the policies of the government.

With the introduction of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, the government has chosen to disregard the legitimate concern expressed by firefighters throughout the so-called consultation process which the government indicates led to this legislation.

Firefighters are dismayed by the provisions of the bill, such as significant changes to the classification of management personnel, the resulting changes to their collective bargaining units, modifications to hours of work, and wage issues. These are some of the main concerns about the Fire Protection and Prevention Act being brought to Queen's Park today.

Furthermore, Ontario firefighters are also here today to share with us the serious reservations they have with regard to proposed changes to workers' compensation legislation by the Conservative government. In both instances, these changes will have significant impacts upon firefighters and how they do their jobs.

I call upon the Premier, the Solicitor General and his colleagues in the government caucus to listen and act upon the concern being expressed by the dedicated men and women who put their lives on the line every day in this province.

### SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Yesterday, the Minister of Community and Social Services, in an incredible fit of arrogance, told this House that the biggest threat to women in this province is the size of the deficit. What a vile thing that is to say. Tell that to the families of the 29 women killed over the past year by abusive spouses. I really hope the minister didn't really mean what she said and that she will rise in the House today, withdraw that remark and offer an apology to the people of this province.

Since the minister raised the issue of the deficit, perhaps she could cut back on the sanctimony and explain why, if the deficit is such a preoccupation of this government, you are going to borrow \$20 billion to give

a tax break to your rich friends. What a twisted sense of priorities it takes to cut back on services for abused women so that the top-earning chief executive officer of a bank, who earns \$3.1 million annually, will get a tax break of \$206,000 over the four years it takes to implement this tax cut.

Evictions are up. Bankruptcies are up. Food bank use is up. The strain on social service agencies, themselves dealing with reduced funding, is way up. It's high time this government stopped blaming others and took responsibility for the plight of the vulnerable in this province.

### ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** I would like to draw Drug Awareness Week to the attention of members. This year's campaign theme says it all: Choice, Consequence and Responsibility.

The abuse of alcohol and other drugs touches the lives of 74% of the people in Ontario. It is estimated that it costs \$3.3 billion a year in direct and indirect costs. Of particular concern is the use of alcohol and other drugs by youth. According to a 1995 Addiction Research Foundation study, the use of substances is increasing among students in grades 7 through 13. This includes alcohol, tobacco and marijuana.

The Ontario Drug Awareness Partnership includes the Ontario Drug Awareness Partnership; the Addiction Research Foundation; Concerns, Canada; the Council on Drug Abuse; the Ontario Secondary School Students' Association; Parents Against Drugs; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; St Vincent de Paul; and some 75 Drug Awareness Week committees.

The Ministry of Health awarded a grant of \$110,000 to the Ontario Drug Awareness Partnership to produce campaign materials and assist local committees with community events. Over 72,000 campaign items have been distributed to Drug Awareness Week committees throughout the province. With this help, communities can address substance abuse locally.

### GREY CUP

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** As most members of the House know, on Sunday the city of Hamilton will be hosting the Grey Cup. It's the first time since 1972 that the premier Canadian sporting event has been held in our great city.

This event could not have occurred without the work of many citizens, the hundreds of people in the community who have worked hard over the past year, including the co-chairs of the Grey Cup committee, Ron Foxcroft and Marnie Paikin. They and their committee have



worked endlessly to ensure that this Grey Cup festival on Sunday becomes the best the CFL has ever seen.

There are many activities that are planned, including parades, beer tents and multicultural festivals. There's a week of fun not only for football fans but for Hamiltonians, Ontarians and Canadians from coast to coast. We certainly welcome our friends from out west to the city of Hamilton, our friends from Edmonton and the rest of western Canada who will be joining us for the game, as well as our friends from Toronto.

It was a pleasure, and I say this reluctantly, the Argos won last Sunday because it will ensure that this Sunday's game will certainly be a greater success, having a large contingent from the city of Toronto, and they will be welcomed with the usual warm Hamilton reception that Toronto fans get to Ivor Wynne Stadium.

I want to thank Mayor Morrow, city council and the organizing committee for the great work they've done and invite everyone across this province and in this Legislature to participate in the events for the rest of the week and enjoy a wonderful Grey Cup on Sunday. I won't tell you who I'm cheering for, but it may not be Toronto.

#### TVONTARIO

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** All members of the House will know the valuable contribution that TVO makes to education and culture in this province, particularly to children's programming, so most of us are quite alarmed at the prospect that this government may be contemplating privatizing that television network.

I am also, though, concerned and want to join with others who have raised the issue of what this might mean for the communication services of the Wawatay Native Communications Society that serves 20,000 first nations people living in the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation area.

Wawatay, as you may know, is a non-profit, multimedia organization that serves the Ojicree of that region. They use the signal of TVO for their distribution system. The distance education serves students in 23 first nations, helping them to complete their high school education without having to leave their home communities. Without the important service provided by TVO on a non-profitable basis, this very important service could be jeopardized.

I hope that all members will join in ensuring that TVO remains and continues to serve the aboriginal people.

1340

#### CONTROL OF SMOKING

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** I rise today to address the House concerning our most serious public health problem in Ontario: smoking.

Since the early 1990s, smoking rates among children have been increasing sharply. I believe that all members will agree that as a society we should do everything possible to discourage children from starting this filthy habit that many adults find impossible to kick.

Recently Dr Richard Schabas, chief medical officer of health for Ontario, released a report on smoking entitled *Tobacco: Sounding the Alarm*. The report recommends

that the provincial government make all places where children go smoke-free, set up a toll-free telephone number to help people quit, help sport and cultural organizations replace tobacco sponsorships at their events and make all workplaces smoke-free. I personally believe that we should set a goal of making all workplaces smoke-free by the year 2000. This would give workplaces a reasonable time frame to adapt to the change.

Governments should also consider making cigarettes more expensive through the reinstatement of taxes on tobacco. Most children do not have a great deal of money, and more expensive cigarettes mean that fewer children will start smoking and fewer children will keep smoking until they're addicted.

The minister and his chief medical officer of health have my complete support in adopting any measures that would prevent children from becoming smoking addicts and dying prematurely from lung cancer, heart disease and strokes.

I urge the government to take immediate action to begin implementing these recommendations.

#### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** This morning I attended a rally on the front lawn of the Legislature to recognize national Child Day and to remember the tragic death of James Lonnee, who was murdered this summer while being held in detention. The rally was held to increase awareness of the abuse our children are suffering in Ontario jails.

It is often said that a nation is best judged by how it treats its most vulnerable citizens. Ontario as of late has a failing grade. From the Bluewater riot to documented beatings and abuse of young offenders at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre and the death of James Lonnee, we in Ontario have failed our children.

When our children break the law and are sentenced we expect them to be returned to family and community whole and safe, and hopefully, with the right treatment program, better for the experience. What we don't expect is our children being returned to us in a pine box.

We hear and see abuse of children from around the world on our nightly newscasts and we cringe at this. I think we become smug sometimes and feel these things don't happen here. Well, they do happen here and are still happening today.

We need a public inquiry into how Ontario still handles its young offenders. It is time for the Solicitor General to take responsibility for young offenders and that we have that inquiry.

#### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WEEK

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** This week is Restorative Justice Week all over Canada. It is a week that marks our efforts to try and deal with the issue of those who have committed crimes in our society, have been convicted for those crimes, have been incarcerated and then have to make their way back into society.

It is important for us in Ontario this year, as we mark this week, to recognize how seriously the current government is failing in its task to add to the restorative nature



of justice. Rather, we see a government bent on a punitive measure of justice which does not seek to reunite those who have committed crimes against society back into the community, a government that is determined to blame, that refuses to protect the prisoners who are within their own custody and that constantly tries to dodge its responsibility.

It is particularly poignant that in the middle of this week, a day that is also national Child Day, we have a government that continues to avoid the responsibility it has for dealing with alleged beatings and the death of a child in custody in this province. It is important for us all, as legislators in this place, to insist that the Solicitor General and the government assume their responsibility.

### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** Twenty-five years ago the first female pages were appointed to the Ontario Legislature. This was an important day for all of Ontario and, more important, for the four young women from the county of Durham.

Christine Tukendorf, Betsy Scott, Dianna Tax and Annette Hoekstra were the first female pages. Alex Carruthers was the MPP for Durham at that time. The criterion to be a page was that they had to be an outstanding student. That tradition continues today. From that time, all pages, male and female, have made a significant contribution to the routines and traditions of this Legislature.

Today I am pleased to welcome Jacqueline Bakker, a student from Knox Christian School in Bowmanville. Jacqueline is the first female page from Durham East since my election. I would also like to welcome Mr and Mrs Will Bakker, Jacqueline's parents, who are present in the gallery today.

I would ask all members to join me in recognizing the 25th anniversary of the first female pages appointed to the Ontario Legislature.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### RETAIL STORE HOURS

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I rise to inform the House that later today I will table amendments to the Retail Business Holidays Act that will remove Boxing Day from the list of days that most retail establishments must be closed.

The bill I will table, called the Boxing Day Shopping Act, will end the confusion that now reigns on the day after Christmas. Store owners will now be free to decide whether they will be open or closed that day and consumers will have the choice of whether to shop or not.

Also, employees will have the choice of whether to work or not. The bill ensures that the right of employees to refuse to work on Boxing Day will be protected through amendments to the Employment Standards Act.

As a government, we have always said that we want Ontario to be open for business. Now people will be able

to do business on what is often the biggest shopping day of the year without worrying about being charged with an offence, and the police can focus on their primary job, fighting crime.

This is also a job creation measure as it will increase hours for Ontario's retail workers. It has always been the position of this government that less regulation means more jobs. We hope to have this bill passed into law in time for this coming Boxing Day.

In addition, in the new year we will transfer the responsibility for this legislation to the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations where it has always belonged.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to thank Mr Tim Hudak, MPP for Niagara South, for his diligent work on this issue over the past year and a half.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** Well, Minister, that's quite a statement. All we seem to be getting is sort of cheesecake statements around here, and I think our caucus is asking "Where's the beef?" from this government.

As you know, we've got the stands packed here with firefighters today who are coming and talking to members of the Legislative Assembly. I and the rest of the members of my caucus were expecting an announcement on that, and specifically the deletion of section 9 of Bill 84, the firefighters' act. These are the onerous labour relations aspects to this bill that's a poison pill that's killing this bill. It's hurting our firefighters in Ontario, and it's going to hurt fire protection in this province.

We're expecting you to come up with something of substance today. Where is the beef? Where are the other government initiatives? Where's the WCB bill we've been waiting for? Where's the rent control bill? Where's the big Metro bill? None of this is coming through, and I bet the House leader here, with a couple of weeks coming before Christmas, is going to want to rush through all this legislation when we could be starting to debate this today. We're not getting this at all.

As far as shopping on Boxing Day is concerned, I'll tell you I don't think people are going to be shopping for Christmas this year, let alone Boxing Day, because there's no jobs, there's no money, and the retailers know that.

1350

This government believes in the trickle-down theory: "We're going to give back this tax rebate to people." Well, they're not spending it. And you know why? Because they are afraid for their jobs. They're not even sure they are going to be employed the next day, because their neighbour who used to work for the Ontario government, she isn't employed any more. So people are afraid and they're not spending. The whole thing is backfiring.

Saying that retailers can legally open on Boxing Day — the good folks of Ontario aren't going to be there, or maybe they're going to be waiting this year and will do all their Christmas shopping after the fact on Boxing Day. Maybe it is a good thing for the retailers that he's done that.

The people of Ontario can't afford today to pay full value for all their goods because they're just very afraid for their jobs. You've pulled out millions and millions of



dollars from the Ontario economy and the people of Ontario are suffering because of that. You're cutting their jobs and the economy is starting to lag. To say that this one little initiative to now legally allow stores to open on Boxing Day is going to help create jobs in the economy, this one day a year, isn't going to do it. This isn't going to do it at all.

Yesterday you came in with a little pat-on-the-back announcement saying that your campaign manager was doing a very good job on the parole board in not keeping all the bad guys out on the street any more.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Was that his campaign manager?

**Mr Ramsay:** Well, his campaign manager is the person who's doing this, I think; a very highly trained individual, I'm sure, who also knows how to run campaigns very successfully down in Leeds-Grenville.

We're not getting the substance. We're not hearing about the truth of Ipperwash. We're not getting the investigations from the Elgin-Middlesex beatings, and we know the beatings were there because the child advocate has documented those beatings. We're not hearing that.

We're not hearing on a number of issues from the Solicitor General the job that he should be doing. If you had been here just a while ago, I made a statement in this House about a rally that was held outside today. It's national Child Day. Specifically it was held in memory of the death of James Lonnie. We are not getting to the bottom of this issue.

You stubbornly have refused on every issue we've brought before this House to hold a proper, open and accountable public inquiry so the people of Ontario would finally get to know what's really going on in your ministry and also to finally find out who's in charge of your ministry, because it's apparent you're an absentee minister when it comes to running that ministry.

Minister, what I say to you today is, this is nice fluff, it's nice icing on the cake, but we'd like to see some real substance from you. We'd like to see you doing your job to make sure there's proper police protection, and now that your government has made the mistake of bringing in video slot machines all over this province, to make sure the protection is there so that organized crime doesn't get into every community right across this province. That's what we're looking to you for. You were the tough guy over on this side in opposition, saying you were going to straighten all this stuff around, and all we get are piece-of-fluff announcements here. We want the public announcements, the public inquiries on these incidents that have happened in Ontario.

With the firefighters here today, we'd like to see a deletion of section 9 of Bill 84 to get those onerous Labour Relations Act pieces out of Bill 84 so that Ontario firefighters can do their job with the respect they've always had. They've never had a job action in this province, they've never put a life at jeopardy in this province, and they never will. You should not insult them like this.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** It's becoming a habit for this minister to stand up and make announcements to try to divert people's attention from the very poor job he is doing in running his ministry and the

number of outstanding issues that are there. The minister is smiling and laughing. He thinks it's funny that the people of Ontario find the job he has been doing absolutely despicable in terms of real protection.

We have a minister who stands up and talks about the Retail Business Holidays Act as though, first of all, it were needed. As we all know, the act was knocked down and it is not necessary to have a separate act on this. This is real fluff, real window dressing.

For this minister to stand up and try to claim that this act is going to create jobs — "This is a job-creating measure," he says — is ridiculous, because it may add a few more hours to a week, given the kind of part-time economy that is building in this province. It is absolute nonsense. It is completely anti-small business. It is particularly geared to the large corporate entities that are trying to take over small business in this country. It is for the large operations that can afford to stay open and can afford not to have time with their families. It is not for the small business people who have very little time to spend with their families anywhere and who cannot compete with the kind of wealth and privilege that larger corporations have.

This is not a happy kind of a situation and to suggest, as this minister does, that this is going to increase the consumer spending of the population of Ontario, as my colleague from Timiskaming pointed out, the lack of confidence that the people of Ontario have that is being reflected in poor retail sales is not going to be resolved by your adding one more day to the retail calendar in this province. What is needed on the part of the government is a real effort to understand that people are not buying because they are not sure they will have a job.

Those people who work in government, those people who work in municipalities, all those operations that are dependent upon the kinds of grants they have from government, ought to be wary of whether or not they'll have a job tomorrow, or whenever the finance minister gets around to making his next economic statement. Everyone in this province is waiting with bated breath to know when the next shoe is going to drop and how many jobs will disappear as a result. If this minister wants to pretend that this useless act, adding one more day to the retail calendar, is going to make any difference to consumer confidence, he's dreaming.

One of the most offensive pieces of this particular statement is the comment about how this will save policing, will allow the police to get back to their primary job of fighting crime. Well, every time this minister starts talking in this vein we know he is trying to divert the attention of the people of Ontario from the very real problems that are faced under the various operations that come under this minister. My colleague from Timiskaming mentioned a number of them: the Ipperwash affair; the issue around youthful offenders; and a long saga of events —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Sorry, member for London Centre. Can I get some order, please? It is very difficult to hear the response. Thank you.

**Mrs Boyd:** — the long saga of unresolved issues in this province, including the Ipperwash affair, including



the treatment of young offenders since February 29 in this system, and, for all we know, at other times; the ignoring by this minister of the fact that the many reports he has asked for have not been handed in: the Drinkwater report on the parole board; the report on Bluewater; the various reports he said he would consult with people on that he hasn't even released. Yet he has the nerve to stand up in this place and try and present himself as bringing forward a bill today that has meaning to the people of Ontario, the people who are really concerned about issues around justice in this province.

This minister ought to be aware that, although the protection is there under the Employment Standards Act now for employees who might be forced to work on Boxing Day, we are looking at that whole act being under review. Employees in this province are in danger of having many of the rights they currently enjoy under the Employment Standards Act removed. How can we have any confidence that this right will not also be removed?

We have little respect for the statement that the minister has made today and want to expose it for what it is: window dressing.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'd like to take this opportunity to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today members of the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario. Please join me in welcoming them.

Also today, from Prescott and Russell County Board of Education and Pleasant Corners Public School, two grade 8 students, Andrew Phillips and Andrew Ferguson. Welcome, gentlemen.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I know that you would want to draw to the attention of the House the fact that Her Worship Mayor Hazel McCallion is also present in the House today.

**The Speaker:** Welcome to the mayor of Mississauga as well. I know full well that we didn't introduce her to know she was in the gallery. Thank you.

1400

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### PAEDIATRIC CARE

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** Today, on national Child Day, my question is for the Minister of Health. I want to talk about 18-month-old Quincy Mutter. She was born with a heart condition. At the time it was not considered serious, but over that period of time she's been admitted to Sick Children's Hospital numerous times with high temperatures of as much as 104 degrees and a number of viral infections.

The situation is obviously serious and the parents are concerned. The family physician has stated that the child needs to see a specialist. They say that the baby's weak heart has made her susceptible to all of these health problems. For over a week they have searched to find a paediatric cardiologist and have not been able to find one.

Mr and Mrs Mutter are in the gallery today. They are scared and they are mad. I'd like to ask the minister, what does he suggest they do?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** The honourable member didn't have to wait till question period to tell me about this case. By simply telling me earlier today, I could have already been working on it on behalf of the parents. My office, along with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, will make every effort to find a paediatric cardiologist for the child if that is what's being requested by the child's physician.

**Ms Castrilli:** That's just the problem. They have gone to the College of Physicians and Surgeons. They have asked for the referral service. They have been given two names, one of a doctor who has already refused to see them, one of another who said, "Well, maybe in April or March." Quite frankly, they can't wait that long. They are extremely concerned about their child. This is a nightmare for them and for parents in this situation. The responsibility is yours. What will you do to end this crisis?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** The responsibility of providing medical services in this province is shared between the government and the physicians of the province. You've not said the —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Hold on. Minister.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** A paediatric cardiologist at the best of times in this province and this country is a very busy physician. I don't know the reasons why the two cardiologists who have been contacted by the honourable member or by the family which the honourable member is representing today or the family's doctor can't see this particular patient, but I'd be happy to look into this matter immediately.

**Ms Castrilli:** The Mutters will certainly be very happy to hear that, and we hope we can get some solutions and not just empty rhetoric. But the problem remains: We can't keep coming to the Legislature with individual situations. There is a crisis out there, a crisis that the minister must address.

It is unfortunate that even the editorial staff at the Medical Post in yesterday's editorial said that for the first time in their history they've called for the resignation of a Minister of Health.

This is very serious. This is a crisis. I hope the Mutters will be able to sleep better tonight but, Minister, you've got to do something. Frankly, if you are not capable of doing it, will you not ask the Premier to step in and resolve this situation as quickly as possible for the health of all our children?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Unless the member is prepared to say why the paediatric cardiologists can't see this particular patient, it's very difficult for me to answer. I can tell you that at the best of times in the history of this province and this country, paediatric cardiologists are very busy doctors. She's not indicating in her question today that it has anything to do with the current relations between the government and the OMA. As you know, we're at the table trying to solve those problems. So I'd be happy to look into this matter, as we do on a regular



basis for patients who have difficulty finding a particular specialist. That's part of the services offered by the case workers at the Ministry of Health, it's part of the services offered by the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and that system was put in place many years ago. It was the same system the Liberals used when they were in office and the same system the NDP used, and I'd be happy to use it in this case.

### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** My question is for the Attorney General. Yesterday, the Minister of Finance had the audacity to say that his tax cut had no effect on child poverty, even though we have some 350,000 children who are currently listed as living in poverty in Ontario.

The family support plan we know is a crucial part of the fight against child poverty in Ontario, but we also know that this program is now in utter shambles and money is just not getting to the kids for basics like food and rent.

The minister says his new family responsibility office is up and running. If this is true, can he tell me why a request for proposals on a contract to analyse the family support plan restructuring program was only issued two weeks ago? Why wasn't this done before he closed the regional offices and left women and children to fend for themselves?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I appreciate the question from the member. The technology that exists in the family support plan is a system known as MECA. MECA is a system that has been overloaded, and the technology was deemed by the auditor back in 1993 to be ineffective. The former government didn't want to deal with answering the complaints of the auditor. What we are now doing, as part of the restructuring of the plan, will be to upgrade the technology as the —

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Out the door, Charles. You've got no credibility.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Lake Nipigon, it's easier for me if you heckle in your seat rather than standing. Thank you.

**Ms Castrilli:** I want to be very clear. This document deals with the basics of the new office. It talks about what computers they will use. It even says the technology won't be purchased until June 1997. It's been four months since the Attorney General closed down the regional offices, fired hundreds of staff, lost or delayed thousands and thousands of files, and only now, in November, are we thinking about the kinds of computers to buy, and it won't be finished until June. That's another six months away. I don't think the Attorney General's answer is satisfactory. How can he sit idle when he knows that the situation is serious and that children are living in poverty and that it's his ministry that's responsible? How does he answer that?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** We are continuing to make use of the existing technology that was part of the way the old plan operated. We're now making the transition to the new plan, and as part of that process we will be imple-

menting and adding the technology that was recommended three years ago by the —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Ms Castrilli:** We've heard these answers before, and the plan isn't getting any better. The fact is that women and children are suffering, and I'd like to give you a specific example. There's a woman in Ottawa called Céline Dorion. She called our office. She stated that last summer she was interviewed by the CBC as part of a show on deadbeat dads because her own husband owes her something in the nature of \$20,000. Last week, after hearing nothing for months, she finally heard from the family support plan. They told her, and this is a direct quote, "People who do interviews against us are not a priority." That ministry official then hung up on her.

So here we are with Christmas just a few weeks away, and Céline Dorion is justifiably worried about her children. She has had no money for months. She is owed \$20,000. Her kids are concerned about rent and food, let alone the luxury of gifts.

Will the Attorney General stand in his place today and admit that the family support plan restructuring has been bungled?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Without knowing any of the details of the particular case, it sounds very much as a case that has been —

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** You are bullies and they are bullying people too.

**The Speaker:** The member for Oriole, order.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** It sounds like a case that has been in difficulty for quite some time.

I can tell you that only 23% of all cases that are now in the family support plan are in full compliance. The bill that we will be introducing today will go a long way to helping someone who's had long-standing problems with this plan. It will allow families who don't want to be in the plan to opt out, it will make use of the new technology and, most importantly, it will provide enforcement tools that will finally begin to collect some of the \$1 billion in arrears that has been allowed to accumulate.

1410

### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Solicitor General. Today is national Child Day. Members on this side of the House are wearing black ribbons in memory of James Lonnee, a youth who was murdered at Wellington Detention Centre, and in memory of the alleged abuse of other youth at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre and Bluewater.

This morning there was a rally to call for justice for children and youth in detention. It was a plea for your government to comply with minimum international rights standards for youth who are held in custody. Youth in the care of your ministry have been beaten, mistreated and verbally abused. James Lonnee came forward and tried to tell people about what was happening in your ministry. He paid the ultimate price: He was murdered.

Minister, you have given us no clear indication that youth in the care of your ministry are any safer today



than they were six months ago. There have been no public independent assessments of what's happening in your ministry. When are you going to provide us with detailed reports so that you may be held accountable for all the things that are going on in the corrections part of your ministry?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I have indicated with respect to the Bluewater matter, the other matters, the tragic death of James Lonnee, that we know there are police investigations involved in those situations. They're not yet complete. Until they are complete we cannot finalize the internal reviews as well. Certainly I would like to see those completed as much as anyone in this province would, but the police, in my view, are moving in an expeditious way to try to conclude their investigations and we will simply have to await the conclusion of police investigations before the other internal reports can be made public and completed.

**Mr Hampton:** We know all about this minister sending out directives and we know all about his calling for this investigation and that bit of research. The fact of the matter is that nothing has been done. This minister gives assurances and then young people in his custody are murdered. He gives assurances and young people in his custody are beaten and abused.

Your assurances that your ministry has sent out directives and instituted new training isn't good enough any more. You aren't trusted and you aren't believed by a whole large group of the public out there. A public inquiry is necessary to ensure the safety of children and youth in your custody.

I ask you again, what have you done to reassure parents and the public that children and youth in your care in correctional facilities are safe from the kind of abuse alleged to have occurred at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre and Bluewater and the tragic death of James Lonnee? What have you done to take care of these problems?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I have indicated in the past that we're moving on a whole range of fronts related to the corrections system, both on the young offender side and on the adult side of the system as well, new training programs that in terms of the review and hiring practices of correctional officers are also going to put them into streams so they can specialize with respect to young offender training or adult training if they're going to serve in one or the other of those divisions.

We're also looking at a dedicated facility for young offenders which will be the first in this province to try and alleviate overcrowding problems that have existed with previous governments, which they failed utterly to deal with.

We are looking at complete changes with respect to infrastructure in the corrections system, which again the previous governments failed to deal with in a substantive way. So I think we're moving in a very substantive way, a very meaningful way, to correct problems that have existed in this system for many years.

**Mr Hampton:** The press conference was held this morning. June Callwood, who's a founder of Justice for Children, was there. She doesn't believe you any more,

Minister. Mary Birdsell, James Lonnee's lawyer, doesn't believe you any more. Les Horne, a former child advocate, doesn't believe you any more. This is your record. You have not released the child advocate's report. Your internal investigation keeps being postponed. No senior officials in your ministry have been disciplined as a result of your not being informed of the allegations of abuse at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. You are being sued by the managers who were the subject of those allegations for your inaction. You are being sued by the youth who allege mistreatment within your facilities, and you are seen by the employees, parents, youth and the general public as being both unable and unwilling to take these matters seriously.

You're the minister. You must take responsibility. Will you today commit to a public inquiry so the public can be made aware of the true facts that led to the death of James Lonnee?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I'm sure the leader of the third party is well aware that when a death in custody occurs there is an automatic inquest, and that inquest will occur with respect to James Lonnee's death.

The member makes a suggestion or an allegation that the general public are upset with the way this government or this minister are dealing with justice issues. I want to say, quite the contrary. That's not the feedback I'm hearing, not the feedback the members on this side of the House are hearing at all. In fact, they're very much pleased with the direction we're taking on justice issues, dramatically different, I agree, with respect to the member from the third party.

These are needs that have not been addressed for many years with respect to, for example, more focus on victims of crime. We've done a host of things to deal with victims. You can talk about strengthening the ability of police to deal with law enforcement and the security questions in our communities. We're doing a significant number of meaningful things in this area, much more than the previous two governments did.

1420

## FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Attorney General. In order to finance your phoney tax scheme, you decimated the family support plan. You laid off 290 experienced staff, you closed the eight regional support plan offices and now women and children across the province aren't receive the child support payments they used to receive regularly.

Minister, today is national Child Day and you should hear what children from Kitchener said last night about what you have done to the family support plan. These are all messages from children.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Attorney General.

**Mr Hampton:** This is what those children had to say.

**The Speaker:** Leader of the third party, time's up. Attorney General.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** What? What time?

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker:** I didn't hold that sign up. The member next to you held the sign up. Your time keeps going.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** We are starting to embark upon a transition to a new plan that will start to pay and collect the \$960 million that's been allowed to accumulate in payments that women and children are not receiving.

Fifty thousand phone calls a day have been coming through to the plan for many years, and those people have not been calling to compliment the plan on getting money to them. It's misleading to say that this problem started yesterday or a couple of months ago. Annually \$100 million has gone uncollected because the plan —

**The Speaker:** Order. Supplementary, member for Sudbury East.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** What is misleading is this minister trying to tell people this office would be up and running by the end of October when it won't be operating until at least next year.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Oriole, I heard exactly what the Attorney General said and I heard what the member for Sudbury East said.

I suggest to the member for Sudbury East that you can't accuse the minister of misleading the House. It must be withdrawn.

**Ms Martel:** Mr Speaker, I'll withdraw it.

This minister can't continue to fool the public and pretend he isn't directly responsible for the financial misery that thousands of women and children are facing across the province now. You, Minister, were directly responsible for laying off 290 staff in August. You were directly responsible for closing the eight regional offices, all this to finance the tax cut on the backs of these women and children who used to receive regular support payments. Maybe you don't want to hear what the kids have to say, but let me tell you some quotes from some of the children we met with last night:

"We need winter clothing and boots and we have to wait for mom's money," said Melissa and Sarah Bell.

"Hi. Help us. Our names are Josh, Amanda and Craig. We need you to send the support to our mom so we can get the clothes, orthodontics, school supplies and glasses. Mom can't do it alone."

"Please send Dad his support. We need school supplies, clothing, boots for winter, and we're hoping that Christmas comes this year. Does it come to your house?" Mike, Amy, Travis and Emily.

I'd like the minister today to tell these children and all other children across the province who are suffering because of your cuts why you are financing tax cuts on the backs of these kids.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As I indicated, these are not new problems. We are introducing for second reading a bill that we believe will provide enforcement that for the first time will start to eat into the \$100 million that accumulates in debt from this plan each and every year. I tell the honourable member that on November 18 we sent out \$1.9 million to 6,104 recipients. That's a plan that is working and getting money out to women and children.

**Ms Martel:** I don't know whom the minister is trying to kid. Thousands of women and children out there are

not receiving their regular support payments. We're getting calls every day in our constituency office from people who are in financial distress because of your cuts. Why don't you assume some responsibility for that?

Let me tell you about some of the bills the women who were at the meeting last night can't pay, since you don't seem to think this is a problem. Susan Murray has a bill from Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro. If she doesn't pay this week, it will be cut off. Louanne Ringle has a bill from Bell Canada. If she doesn't pay this week, her phone service will be cut off. Jane Cardy has a notice here from Waterloo North Hydro, "Pay up this week or your hydro will be cut off." We got a notice to Anne Parker in the Ministry of Community and Social Services saying she should pay her overpayment now. We've got an eviction notice for Jenny McKay because she hasn't been able to pay her rent.

The minister has got to understand that as a direct result of his cuts to staff and his closure of the regional office, families who used to receive regular support payments are now not. What are you going to do about it and why are you financing the tax cut on the backs of —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** We are endeavouring to continue to increase payments on a daily basis. We've done that by a 25% increase in —

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Tell that to her landlord.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** Tell that to this woman's and her kids' landlord.

**Ms Martel:** Her hydro's going to be cut off next week.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I have a lot of people coming into my office who are in similar circumstances because of your —

**The Speaker:** Member for Cochrane South, I'm warning you, as well as the members for Cochrane North, Sudbury East and Welland-Thorold. I'm telling you right now, that's the warning. Please come to order. That's the warning.

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: My office has just received a call from the office of the Minister of Health. The caller was very angry that we had dared raise the matter in the House without giving prior notice. That is bullying tactics. Just for the record, the family did call the —

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister of Health.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. A point of privilege?

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** It's question period, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I understand it's question period, member for Kenora. It was your member who stood on the point of privilege. Point of privilege, Minister of Health.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** I witnessed the phone call. That did not occur as the honourable member accused. The honourable member's office said they knew nothing about the case. We're now on the phone, right there, to the paediatric cardiologists at Sick Kids and we're trying to do the best we can for the family.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. I am in the process —  
*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** If you want to take another point of privilege, go ahead.

**Ms Castrilli:** In fairness, that doesn't deal with the point of privilege. My office was called and told that the minister's office was very angry that we were raising this matter in the House without prior notice. Since when do we need prior notice —

**The Speaker:** Member for Downsview, it's not even a point of privilege and, quite frankly, it's using up very valuable time. I understand that it's — I would prefer to deal with this after question period, and it would probably suit everyone's needs.

Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** We are taking steps to improve this plan so that we can get money to women and children and —

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** There's the rest of the bills, Charlie. There's the bills from last night.

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, come to order.

**Mr Christopherson:** There's the bills.

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, I'm warning you to come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton East.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Members of the third party, would you please come to order. Thank you.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Charlie, pay up. Pay up. Women and children —

**The Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon, I have now warned you as well.

**Mr Pouliot:** But they don't have a voice, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** And now I'm warning you again.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** As my record in this Legislature will attest, I'm a very patient person. New question.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** There are women and children —

**The Speaker:** Member for Sault Ste Marie — I am going to name the member for Sault Ste Marie.

**Mr Martin:** Well, you named everybody else.

**The Speaker:** Well, then, I will name the member for Sault Ste Marie.

1430

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I have a new question concerning the Ipperwash incident. You will recall, Premier, that in September 1995, three months after you became Premier, for the first time ever in Canada, a first nations person was killed in a land dispute. There are many questions about your government's role in this affair.

What we do know is that your member, Mr Beaubien, the Conservative member for the area, told the police at the command post, four hours before the shooting, that he had sent a fax to the Premier advising of his intentions

and that he wanted a return call regarding his intentions. This fax becomes very important. On November 6, Premier, you said all that was in that fax from Mr Beaubien were things that were on the news that night. On November 6, Premier, you said you would release a copy of the fax that Mr Beaubien sent. Will you table that fax now?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I have not seen the fax, first of all. I don't believe it was a fax to me. I understood there was a fax that had come into the office, or at least there was the allegation of that. My understanding is that any of the faxes have not contained anything that really wasn't public knowledge. I personally have no objection — you can have all the faxes you want — but we have lawyers looking at whether release of any information jeopardizes any of the court cases that are there. If they determine it does not, we'll be happy to release it before.

**Mr Phillips:** A week and a half ago, Premier, you promised you would look into this matter and you would get back to the House quickly on the matter. You promised you would look at it and you would table those faxes. Frankly, one can only reach the conclusion that your staff have looked at them and they do not confirm what you told the House on November 6. You told the House on November 6 that all that was in those faxes was what was on the daily newscast and that you would have no difficulty in releasing them.

There is only one conclusion we can reach: Your staff have looked at those faxes, they contain privileged information, they confirm that Mr Beaubien, representing your government, four hours before the shooting, leaning over the shoulders of our OPP who were trying to do a job — he was there daily, constantly, leaning on their shoulders, telling the police he was in touch with you, Premier, the Attorney General and the Solicitor General. On November 6, you promised to release those faxes. What other conclusion can we reach but that you are trying to cover up what is in those faxes?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me set the record straight on a number of things you have indicated. Mr Beaubien was not representing me nor my office nor the ministry; Mr Beaubien was representing his constituents, both native and non-native, who had very grave concerns. There were concerns about safety, there were concerns about the park, there were concerns about neighbours adjoining the park. So Mr Beaubien, quite appropriately, I believe, was seeking all the information he possibly could.

I can tell you I think there's a freedom of information request that has come in and is following the normal process, not only from the freedom —

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** You said you were going to release the fax.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Hamilton East, I'm warning you now. Please come to order.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I've got a question to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Earlier this week she tried to sweeten up the



workfare deal for municipalities by promising to finance them to the tune of \$450 million. Is \$450 million to implement workfare going to put food on the plates of the one in three Metro Toronto children who rely on social assistance? Is that going to put roofs over the heads of children in the 13 Toronto families who are evicted from their home every working day as a result of taking a 22% cut to their social assistance?

Tell us how your workfare program is going to address the vicious crisis of child poverty and child hunger here in Toronto and across Ontario.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** The honourable member across the way may wish to cast his mind back to some months ago when we announced Ontario Works, when we talked about the fact that we had a budget for \$450 million to implement Ontario Works because we believe that our municipal partners deserve the financial support. I would like to announce, while I'm on my feet, that we have the 10th community, Oxford county, which has just been approved to join the other communities in offering Ontario Works across the province.

I believe that \$450 million is a worthwhile investment to get individuals on social assistance back into a job. Our government believes that the best support for any family is a job, and that is the goal of this plan.

**Mr Kormos:** The minister should know that an organization called Campaign 2000 released a proposal this week for a social investment fund that would provide a decent standard of living for all children.

This government has \$450 million to spend on their workfare program. They've got \$17 million to spend on their Web net hi-tech ad program. They've got \$22 billion that they're going to spend to finance a tax cut for their rich friends.

Minister, today is national Child Day. Do you care enough about the hungry children in this municipality and province to call Ottawa today and commit Ontario to participating in a social investment fund to eradicate child poverty in Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** This government prefers to measure our commitment by the actions and the steps we are taking rather than by the hyperbole we are getting from the other side of the House today, with all due respect to their concern, and I know they are legitimately concerned.

**Mr Kormos:** No. Children are hungry. One in three children in Toronto is on social assistance and you cut their allowance. You are starving children. You are putting them on the streets.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Welland-Thorold, come to order. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We do believe that a decent standard of living is extremely important for families —

**Mr Kormos:** Children are on the streets and you don't give a tinker's dam.

**The Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, you'll have to come to order or I'm going to name you next time. Thank you.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We do believe that a decent standard of living is extremely important for families and children. We are attempting very hard to maintain those programs

that help do that despite the \$2 billion we're losing from Ottawa —

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** When is it going to happen in Ontario?

**Mr Kormos:** You're not prepared to respond to the crisis. Speaker, children are hungry in this province and living in poverty at an unprecedented level and she's not prepared to do anything about it — \$22 billion.

**The Speaker:** I've warned the member for Welland-Thorold a number of times and I have no option left but to name the member for Welland-Thorold. Mr Peter Kormos.

**Mr Kormos:** What about the starving children? You don't care. You're putting them out on the street.

*Mr Kormos was escorted from the chamber.*

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** It's unfortunate that my colleague across the way is not going to be in the House to hear our commitment to working with Ottawa.

**The Speaker:** It's a fairly long-held tradition in this place that we do not comment on whether someone is in or not in the House. I caution the minister that is inappropriate.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** If I have caused the honourable member offence, I withdraw that comment.

The honourable member made reference to children being hungry, which is one of the reasons we have invested \$5 million in partnership with the private sector for a breakfast program. The members opposite may be concerned because their program wasn't working. We want to make sure ours is.

The final point that I think is worth mentioning is that we are quite interested in working with Ottawa, despite the pressures they're putting on our budget, to have an integrated child benefit. We would like to talk to them about that because we believe that may well be an appropriate solution for child poverty in this country.

1440

## ACADEMIC TESTING

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** My question is for the Minister of Education and Training. Over the past several years Ontario students have written several national and international aptitude tests. In 1993 and 1994 Ontario 13- and 16-year olds participated in the Canada-wide school achievement indicators program, and in 1991 13-year old students participated in the international assessment of education progress in math and science tests. In both these tests Ontario was only able to keep pace with the average. In fact, in the IAEP test, when comparing Canadian provinces Ontario English students tied for second-last and Ontario French students placed last. It's my understanding that the results of yet another international test were released today.

Ontario spends more on education per pupil than almost any other jurisdiction in the world. My question to you is: Do the results from this international test prove that our students' performance match our spending?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I want to thank the member for Scarborough East for the question. I hope my colleagues opposite

share our interest in and our concern for the test results of students in this province. In fact, the results of the third international math and science test were released today. In this test over half a million young people, nine and 13 years old, from 41 countries participated, including Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Ontario as provinces inside Canada.

Unfortunately, I have to report that the TIMS results confirmed the trend of other international and national tests over the last few years. While Ontario students hovered around the international average, our students fell below the Canadian average in both subjects at both age levels, a performance that I'm sure is not satisfactory to anyone concerned and something we wish to address.

**Mr Gilchrist:** When our IAEP test results were released in 1992, then Premier Bob Rae was quoted in the paper as saying: "The tests show clearly that we have problems. I don't think anyone in the school system can look for excuses." He said: "It's a question of focus and a question of how we can get the system to do its job."

Minister, national and international tests show that Ontario produces average students. I don't think, and I certainly would hope that no other member in this House believes, that these results are acceptable. What are we doing to ensure that Ontario's goal of being the best in the world is achieved?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** As has been pointed out by the former leader of the now third party when he was Premier, this is a matter of concern, I think, to all the people of Ontario. Certainly it's not a partisan issue and I think it's one that needs to be treated in a non-partisan fashion. I know it's of concern to my colleagues and I know it's of concern to my colleagues across the chamber whom I've talked to privately on this matter.

These results are not an indication that Ontario students are average or that Ontario teachers are average, in fact quite the opposite. But we do believe we need to improve our system of education in Ontario to provide for more exceptional results by our students and to use the talents of our teachers better. We are moving now to establish a rigorous and demanding core curriculum which we believe will help to improve our test results nationally and internationally. We're making sure that our dollars spent on education are focused on the classroom where they make a difference with young people. And we're certainly enthusiastic about doing testing on an ongoing basis across the province using the EQAO. I believe there'll be a better future for the students of the province of Ontario and I expect those results to go up in the near future.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PLAN

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** On this, national Child Day, I have a question to the Minister of Health. It concerns a nine-year-old girl living with her parents on a dairy farm in North Dundas county south of Ottawa. The nine-year-old girl's name is Kayleigh Boyd, and Kayleigh suffers from Rett Syndrome, a very serious neurological disorder that has imposed very significant challenges not only Kayleigh but on her family, which is continuing to care for her in their farm home.

Kayleigh is covered under the Ontario drug benefit program, but there's a problem. The problem is this: She requires a special formula because she's tube-fed. She has to be tube-fed. The special formula contains milk protein and she's allergic to that product. Her doctor, a well-known paediatrician in Ottawa, has prescribed an alternative that is medically acceptable and, as it happens, is cheaper; it's about half the price of that which has been suggested by your officials at the Ontario drug benefit program. But the alternative has not been approved by your officials. Will you, for the health and wellbeing of this nine-year-old girl, use your influence to approve the alternative?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** I would be happy to look into the matter. As you know, the Minister of Health doesn't directly approve the alternative. The medical committee that's called the Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee, which is the same committee that's been around for many years in the province, makes the final determination. I will certainly expedite the process, though.

**Mr Conway:** Minister, this family is going to extraordinary lengths to look after their nine-year-old daughter at home. They have the option to have that child institutionalized, where the cost would be \$80,000 a year and there would be no question about any of this nourishment that nine-year-old Kayleigh must have for her health and wellbeing. If you are part of a Common Sense Revolution, will you use the powers vested in you to rescue this nine-year-old girl and her family from this bureaucratic Bermuda Triangle that continues to cause them so much grief and so much hardship?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Yes, I will do everything humanly possible to help them.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. On a number of occasions in this House I have raised questions to you with respect to the provincial capital funding required for the four child care centres located in Toronto schools that are being rebuilt. I've point out to you that without the capital funding coming from the province, these child care centres will not be rebuilt. There are 200 families that are at risk of losing their child care spaces.

Specifically, though, on October 17 I asked you a question, and I'm quoting from Hansard: "What I would ask from you today is for a commitment that you will agree to meet with the Toronto board officials and the parents of these four centres." Your response: "Either I or my officials would be quite happy to meet with them."

Last week a member of your office staff met with the parents from the Eglinton centre. The other parents were refused admittance to that meeting; the Toronto board was refused admittance to that meeting. In fact, your office has said to those other parents and to the Toronto board that they will not get a meeting. Minister, that's not what you committed to. Will you today commit to me you will instruct your staff to set up such a meeting that either you or they will attend?



**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I appreciate the honourable member's concern. Yes, I did give a commitment that either I or my staff would meet with the families involved, and I will instruct them to do so.

**Ms Lankin:** I appreciate your taking action on this and I hope you will take swift action because, as I pointed out to you, the clock is ticking. We are in danger of losing these child care centres. The architectural plans are going forward. They have to be approved and the school board has to make a decision on what they're going to build and whether there will be a child care centre there or not. It will not happen without the provincial funding.

I've pointed out to you that the \$40 million in new operating money that you have put in place in this year's budget which you've put a freeze on and not spent is really just the \$40 million in capital that you cancelled. You've got the money sitting there. There are four months left in this annual budget year.

Minister, will you agree to convert \$1.6 million of that \$40 million from operating into capital? That's all it takes, and you would save the 200 spaces that currently exist. You would make sure these families still have child care for their kids.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** As the honourable member knows, the auditor had raised some concerns about capital spending in the child care area under the previous government, and I guess before I would authorize capital funding, there are some concerns that would need to be addressed.

The first one is that I am not aware of the individual circumstances of these 200 families, but if there are those that need fee subsidy, we are continuing to fund millions of dollars worth of fee subsidy of which Metro unfortunately is not matching its 20% share, so that has increased the waiting list for fee subsidies. Secondly, I understand that if they are parents who can afford to pay what they like to call the full fee, there's a vacancy rate in Toronto of about 2,000 spaces. Both those factors are very important before we take taxpayers' money for more capital spending.

1450

#### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Yesterday you announced one component of this government's equal opportunity plan, a Web site on the Internet.

As the minister knows, I have a keen interest in this area and have been working with Trevor Wilson, an entrepreneur who is pioneering a business case for equity here in Ontario. He has worked with several companies such as IBM and National Grocers and many others. He's also working in countries like South Africa. Mr Wilson is currently developing a Web site, and I wonder how your ministry site will complement the works and efforts of individuals such as Mr Wilson.

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** I'd like to thank the member for Niagara Falls for his question. I know he has a keen

interest in and strongly supports this government's plan for equal opportunity.

The site that was announced yesterday is just one component of the equal opportunity plan, but it's based on partnership. There's even a section on the site which is dedicated to the sharing of best-practice models. This site and further announcements that are going to be made fulfil the promise that we made to the people of Ontario both during the election and last December that equal opportunity is a priority with this government.

#### Interjection.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Fort York, it may be, in your opinion; it may be. But I need order. Thank you.

**Mr Maves:** I'm glad that businesses and individuals in my riding will have access to this Web site and the education it will provide them so that they can take advantage of the economic benefits the plan has to offer. I wonder, Minister, if you can explain how the equal opportunity plan and the Web site differ from the previous government's approach.

**Hon Ms Mushinski:** I'd be happy to answer that question. The opposition said that business wasn't interested in equal opportunity. They couldn't have been more wrong. In fact, business has bought into equal opportunity in a big way. Over 125 organizations and individuals, such as Manulife Financial, IBM Canada, the Canadian Abilities Foundation, Motorola Canada and the Richard Ivey school of economics and business at Western, have participated in the development and creation of this Web site. Indeed, it is their Web site. They weren't coerced into participating, they weren't threatened with fines and pending legislation, yet they —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

#### FIRE SAFETY

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I have a question to the Solicitor General. It's another example of how this government is lowering safety standards to save money.

I want to ask you today, Solicitor General, why you and the Ontario fire marshal are putting hundreds of thousands of Ontario tenants who live in pre-1976 apartments at risk. As you know, the retrofit section of the Ontario fire code allows for unrated solid wood doors, as they give good protection, but the fire marshal is willing to allow these hollow, tubular-core doors, which are dangerous and don't afford the 20-minute fire protection that's in the code. Why are you allowing the fire marshal to put lives at risk?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I'll take the question as notice and get back to the member as quickly as I can.

**Mr Ramsay:** This is another example of this minister not doing his job, because I know that representation has been made to your office and members of your personal staff have met with representatives about this issue and you should be briefed on it.

As you know, Minister, it's a serious issue because on January 6, 1995, fire broke out in a high-rise building at 2 Forest Laneway in North York and six people died in that fire. At that time, the coroner's jury recommended

increased penalties for non-compliance with the Ontario fire code and to require high-rise apartment building owners to complete the retrofit requirements for doors.

Historically, Ontario fire chiefs have relied on the Ontario fire marshal's office for advice on how to enforce the code. Understandably, the chief of North York will not accept hollow core doors any longer. Minister, when are you going to start protecting the lives of tenants instead of the bank accounts of landlords?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question.

#### ATTORNEY GENERAL'S COMMENTS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Attorney General and it again concerns the comments that the Attorney General has made. I want to ask you directly. Hansard shows that on November 7, 1996, you came into this Legislature, you referred to two members of the third party, and then you made this remark: "I said there was a break-in." "...there was a break-in." Do you deny making those comments in this Legislature on November 7?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I've explained the comments that I've made and my explanation stands.

**Mr Hampton:** We've been asking lawyers around the province to review the Attorney General's comments — they are, after all, in Hansard; they're part of the public record — and this is the comment we received:

"The Attorney General is the chief administrator of the laws of the province. As such, the office of the Attorney General must remain free of the partisan considerations that may dominate the Legislature. An Attorney General, for instance, must be scrupulous in avoiding any comments that might jeopardize the prospects of a fair hearing for any future criminal proceeding."

This lawyer then goes on to say: "Harnick's reference in the Legislature crossed this line. It was wrong to disclose the identity of two members of the Legislature. It was wrong for him subsequently to say, 'break into an office,' and it was wrong for him to further add, 'Ask Kormos what he did with the security guard.'"

You have clearly crossed the line in terms of behaviour and conduct that is appropriate for an Attorney General. Minister, will you resign?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As I've said, I've explained my remarks and my explanation stands.

#### PAEDIATRIC CARE

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: In response to a question raised by the member for Downsview, I hope she will inform the family that Dr Goldbloom at Sick Children's Hospital would be happy to see the child at their convenience, or immediately.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question.

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, at a recent speech —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Kenora, come to order. The Minister of Health rose on a point of privilege because

the member for Downsview had risen on a previous point of privilege. That wasn't a question; that wasn't rotation. He was not standing on his answer. If the member for Downsview had not risen on a point of privilege, I wouldn't have recognized the member then, I would have waited till after question period, but she did.

New question, the member for Hamilton West.

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I welcome the answer from the Minister of Health. The parents of the child are watching the proceedings —

**The Speaker:** That's great, but what's your point of order?

**Mr Sergio:** It's coming, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I need it now. Stop the clock, please.

**Mr Sergio:** My point of order is that it is fine to get some assistance from the health minister, but it's terrible that we have to come to this House to seek some assistance —

**The Speaker:** Member for Yorkview, come to order. That's not a point of order. A point of privilege, the member for Downsview.

1500

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** So you stop the clock for the government, eh, Speaker?

**The Speaker:** The member for Hamilton Centre, come to order, please.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Why is the clock stopped?

**The Speaker:** The clock's stopped because there is now a point of privilege, a point of order. I'd recognized the member for Hamilton West to allow her to put her question. The member for Downsview.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Hamilton Centre, come to order. The member for Cochrane North. The member for Sault Ste Marie. I'm going to name the member for Sault Ste Marie. On a number of occasions when they've stood in this place, the government members, I've stopped the clock as well.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** You show me in Hansard where you've done that. This is entirely unfair.

**The Speaker:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine, come to order. If you'd like me to, I will.

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** Mr Speaker, pursuant to your instructions earlier, I was going to wait until the end of question period to fully raise my point of privilege and have you rule on it. I'm grateful for the minister's attention to this matter, but that wasn't the point of privilege I raised. The point of privilege I raised was that we received a call in my office from the minister's office indicating that we couldn't raise an issue without giving forewarning to the minister. The reality is that the family did try and got nowhere with the minister's office and they turned to us. I don't believe we should be giving warning to the government of the things we want to raise in this House —

**The Speaker:** I'm not denying that you raised that point of privilege. I just gave the Minister of Health the



same opportunity to raise a point of privilege on the same issue. It's only fair. I'm going to finish question period. Can I take your privilege up after question period?

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I'd like to take this up now, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Okay. The member for Scarborough.

**Mr Curling:** When the member rose on a point of privilege, you ruled it was not a point of privilege, and then you accept a response on a point of privilege. You said it wasn't a point of privilege. I'm confused.

**The Speaker:** I'll be happy to explain the situation, if you'd like, after question period. The point was that it wasn't a point of privilege. The Minister of Health rose on a point of privilege. I am obligated to hear a point of privilege, and I offered at the time to defer it till after question period. I offered the member for Downsview to hear it after question period. The member said no, so I heard on the same point of privilege or a similar point of privilege.

Now, the member for Hamilton East.

## WORKFARE

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, at a recent speech you gave to the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association you suggested that the mandatory component of the Ontario Works program was no longer a requirement. Has there been any change in the mandatory aspects of Ontario Works and can you please tell me, if in fact there is no change, does the mandatory nature of the program affect welfare recipients specifically? How does it affect them?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I can understand the member's confusion, having read some of the media reports, but there has been no change in the policy of Ontario Works. Social assistance is a mandatory program for municipalities to offer in partnership with the province. Workfare or, as it is otherwise called, Ontario Works, is the new social assistance system in Ontario, so therefore each municipality must provide a program of employment supports, community participation and employment placement as part of their partnership with us.

## PETITIONS

### FIRE SAFETY

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it was gathered by two Sudbury firefighters, Marc Leduc and Mike O'Reilly:

"Whereas the firefighters of Sudbury and Ontario are very concerned about Bill 84;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is unfair;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is discriminatory;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 endangers the wellbeing of the people of Ontario;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 requires extensive changes;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 needs broad provincial public hearings before implementation;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand the Solicitor General to rewrite Bill 84 before being enacted into law and after extensive public hearings across Ontario."

I sign my name to this petition, as I agree with it.

## CHILD CARE

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas child care is an essential service and children should not be used to make money; and

"Whereas reducing current standards to minimal building codes compromises the safety of children; and

"Whereas providing funding to the private sector will lead to reduced accountability for tax dollars; and

"Whereas children's growth and development could be in serious jeopardy without trained professionals caring for them; and

"Whereas reducing monitoring inspections and increasing staff-child ratios will result in poor-quality child care programs; and

"Whereas staff wages are a major indicator of quality, and proposed reductions and wage subsidies will have a negative impact on child care; and

"Whereas the need for parental choice in child care is recognized;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to reconsider the directions proposed in Improving Ontario's Child Care System, the report released by Janet Ecker, as we feel it will have a negative impact on the families of Ontario."

I attach my signature.

## SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** I have a petition which is signed by a number of parents from Niagara-on-the-Lake, part of my riding, who are concerned about education in our community.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government is planning to make significant changes to the delivery and governance of education in this province; and

"Whereas we as parents believe that school councils should play an important role in education, with clearly defined responsibilities limited to their particular school communities; and

"Whereas we as ratepayers are extremely disturbed that consideration is being given to abolish school boards and eliminate decision-making by locally elected representatives;

We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly that the present structure of school boards within the province of Ontario continue to have a major role in the governance of schools to deal with broad policies as advocates for the students in their community, to provide cost-efficient educational services and to be directly accountable to the parents and local ratepayers."

## RENT REGULATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is bringing down

one of the most devastating pieces of legislation. I have a petition to Premier Michael Harris, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Al Leach and members of the Ontario provincial Legislature which reads:

"We, the undersigned, protest this government's actions against tenants described below.

"The Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants. Rent control allows for security and stability in their homes and communities. Uncontrolled rent increases leave tenants, their families and other communities open to eviction, personal distress, and contribute directly to social instability. We want this government to stop any actions that would allow uncontrolled rents.

"Further, this government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favourable to landlords for easier and faster evictions. This is unacceptable to Ontario tenants and damaging to Ontario's communities.

"This government also plans to get rid of public housing and has halted the creation of basement apartments and a new supply of affordable non-profit housing. These types of housing are necessary for low- and moderate-income tenants to obtain accommodation they can afford. The government must cease all actions that reduce the affordability and availability of these kinds of housing.

"This government has eliminated funding for United Tenants of Ontario, five municipal tenant federations and other important tenant services at a time when they're attacking all tenants' rights. Funding for those groups must be reinstated so that Ontario's tenants' rights are protected. A consultation process with tenants' organizations should be initiated immediately to develop a plan for suitable funding for services to tenants."

I affix my signature to this petition.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have in my hands 251 petitions signed by over 3,300 members of CEP, the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. These petitions were forwarded to me on behalf of those members by Joel Carr, the national representative, and Ed Nelson, the Ontario regional vice-president. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the Harris government will introduce legislation to amend the Workers' Compensation Act and distribute a discussion paper about changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act; and

"Whereas the expected changes include erosion of the right to refuse unsafe work, workers will be forced to apply to their employer for WCB benefits and employers will decide if the claim is valid; reduction in power of the joint health and safety committees; and eliminate compensation for certain injuries and diseases; and

"Whereas the Workers' Compensation Act is a vital protection for all workers in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Occupational Health and Safety Act has prevented untold numbers of accidents and saved thousands from illness and diseases;

"We, therefore, demand full public hearings throughout the province of Ontario on the Workers' Compensation Act proposed changes, and no changes to the Occupa-

tional Health and Safety Act, workers' right to refuse and joint health and safety committees."

I add my name in support with theirs.

1510

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the administration of Families Against Deadbeats, Renate Diorio, Heinz Paul and Danielle McIsaac, are in total support of Bill 82, presented by the Honourable Charles Harnick to the Legislative Assembly on October 2, 1996, outlining the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, to replace the Family Support Plan Act, 1992;

"Whereas the changes will relieve the taxpayers of Ontario and provide proper enforcement required to collect and administer child support payments and orders;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We support and agree with all of the changes outlined in the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, set forth by the Honourable Charles Harnick as Bill 82, and urge the Legislature to pass this bill into law as soon as possible."

I agree with this petition and I'm signing it.

#### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas the Conservative government of Mike Harris has closed three out of five hospitals in Thunder Bay and two out of three hospitals in Sudbury; and

"Whereas drastic funding cuts to hospitals across Ontario are intimidating hospital boards, district health councils and local hospital restructuring commissions into considering the closing of local hospitals; and

"Whereas hospitals in the Niagara region have provided an outstanding essential service to patients and have been important facilities for medical staff to treat the residents of the Niagara Peninsula and will be required for people in Niagara for years to come; and

"Whereas the population of Niagara is on average older than that in most areas of the province;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Health to restore adequate funding to hospitals in the Niagara region and guarantee that his government will not close any hospitals in the Niagara Peninsula."

I affix my signature, as I'm in complete agreement with this petition.

#### EDUCATION

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas the proposed changes to secondary schools as outlined in Ontario Secondary Schools 1998, the detailed discussion document, makes it easier for students to drop out; and

"Whereas the types of courses offered, as outlined in the discussion document, will not meet the needs of minority students; and



"Whereas there is too much emphasis placed on workplace education, as outlined in the discussion document; and

"Whereas, as outlined in the discussion document, students who are at risk of dropping out will continue to be at risk; and

"Whereas there is a lack of minority teachers to act as teacher advisers, as outlined in the discussion document; and

"Whereas there is reduced time for ESL courses, as well as English courses, as outlined in the discussion document; and

"Whereas the proposed anti-discrimination education, as outlined in the discussion document, is virtually meaningless;

"We, the undersigned, wish to express our great dismay and opposition to these proposed changes and urge the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training to reconsider these ill-advised changes."

This petition is signed by 20 residents, mostly of Toronto but from a number of areas in the province, and I affix my signature to it.

#### SNOWMOBILE REGISTRATION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** I wish to present a petition on behalf of Charles Harper and Larry Davidson of the Port Perry Snowmobile Club.

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs contributes in a significant way to the tourism economy of Ontario;

"Whereas the snowmobile clubs are very conscious of safe operation and compliance of all regulations with their machines;

"Whereas the snowmobile operators spend thousands of dollars on their machines;

"Whereas the expensive modern machines usually have decals with names and other lettering;

"Whereas the current MTO issues registration numbers that are not complementary to the other lettering on the machines;

"We, therefore, petition the Legislature of Ontario to amend the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act, Revised Statutes of 1990, chapter M.44, regulation 804, section 23, subsections (3), (4) and (5), and allow the operators to affix their own registration numbers at their own expense."

I am proud to affix my name along with other members from the Port Perry area.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell):** I've got a petition signed by over 50 concerned parents of Orléans.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the most efficient family support payment system, for all the families in Ontario, is one that provides timely and adequate service; and

"Whereas recent delays in support payments are unacceptable to residents of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario promptly implement a level of service that will ensure timely distribution of family support payments, including arrears, to recipients in order that they may provide quality care for their children."

I also affix my signature.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have petitions from the Ontario Federation of Labour, United Steelworkers of America, Canadian Auto Workers and Canadian Union of Public Employees.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Workers' Compensation Board has about \$7.6 billion in assets and the WCB's unfunded liability has been decreasing for the past two years; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is using scare tactics about WCB finances to justify attacking workers' compensation benefits and the rights of injured workers; and

"Whereas the Tories are planning to take \$15 billion from injured workers and give \$6 billion to employers, including the government's rich corporate friends; and

"Whereas the government has developed its plans in secret, meeting with insurance company executives and big business lobbyists without holding a single public hearing; and

"Whereas the government needs to listen to people saying that taking money from injured workers and their families, lowering incentives for employers to make workplaces safer and rolling back the clock on justice for workers is not the way to make Ontario a better place to live;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold full, province-wide public hearings on any WCB reform; to encourage participation in communities all across Ontario; and to tell the Tory government to stop attacking the standard of living of working families."

I add my name in support with theirs.

#### PAROLE SYSTEM

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Progressive Conservative government has passed a resolution urging the government of Canada to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada to ensure that convicted murderers serve their entire sentences; and

"Whereas convicted first-degree murderers are allowed to apply to the court for a reduction of the parole ineligibility period; and

"Whereas victims' families must relive the horrors of the original crime through a jury hearing for this early parole and relive this every time the killer is given rehearings for early parole; and

"Whereas the provincial government must bear a large degree of the costs involved with a jury hearing;

"We, the undersigned, ask the Attorney General of Ontario to request the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to reconsider his decision under Bill

C-45 and to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada.”

I affix my signature.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr Laughren from the standing committee on government agencies presented the committee's 25th report.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Does the Chair wish to make a statement?

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** No, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Pursuant to standing order 106(g)(11), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### BOXING DAY SHOPPING ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 SUR L'OUVERTURE DES MAGASINS LE LENDEMAIN DE NOËL

Mr Runciman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to permit shopping on Boxing Day by amending the Retail Business Holidays Act and the Employment Standards Act / Projet de loi 95, Loi visant à permettre l'ouverture des magasins le lendemain de Noël en modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail et la Loi sur les normes d'emploi.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** The Boxing Day Shopping Act removes December 26 from the list of holiday closing dates. This will allow businesses the choice of whether to be open or closed, will allow their employees the choice of whether or not to work and will give consumers the choice of whether or not to shop on Boxing Day. This bill includes amendments to the Employment Standards Act in order to maintain the right of employees of retail businesses to refuse to work on December 26. Through this legislation the government will demonstrate that Ontario is open for business.

1520

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY AND SUPPORT ARREARS ENFORCEMENT ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 SUR LES OBLIGATIONS FAMILIALES ET L'EXÉCUTION DES ARRIÉRÉS D'ALIMENTS

Mr Harnick moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act to establish the Family Responsibility Office, protect the interests of children and spouses through the strict enforcement of support orders while offering flexibility to responsible payors and make consequential amendments to certain statutes / Projet de loi 82, Loi créant le Bureau des obligations familiales, visant à protéger les intérêts des enfants et des conjoints grâce à l'exécution rigoureuse des ordonnances alimentaires tout en offrant une certaine souplesse aux payeurs responsables, et apportant des modifications corrélatives à des lois.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Madam Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent from each of the parties to divide the opening debate time allotment as many ways as we wish. Is that —

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** That's not quite said correctly. Each party's leadoff could be split among multiple critics.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Each party's leadoff can be split among multiple speakers.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** I want to be very clear on what we're moving here. You're asking that each party's leadoff be split in whatever way each party wants to split that leadoff time?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Exactly.

**The Acting Speaker:** This is for all three parties. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I'm pleased to present for second reading the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996. This act replaces the Family Support Plan Act, 1992.

As I have said in earlier statements to this House, Ontario's family support plan is broken. As Attorney General, I am committed to fixing it. I'm committed to ensuring that the children and women of this province get the support payments that they are legally entitled to receive.

Every member of this Legislature knows that there are problems with the current family support plan, and every member knows that the roots of those problems go back a long way, all the way back to 1987. That's when the former Liberal government set up SCOE, the support and custody orders enforcement program. This was followed in 1992 by the former NDP government's Family Support Plan Act. Both these efforts, while well intentioned, were flawed. Neither one was successful in achieving what our government considers to be the bottom line for these programs: getting support payments to children and women as quickly as possible.

What we have today is an inadequate family support plan. It is a plan that is broken. It is simply not working in a way that properly meets the needs of children and women.

Just how broken is the family support plan? There are cracks, I believe, in the very foundations of the old plan. Its service to clients and its enforcement of support orders in many cases is non-existent.

Access to the family support plan has always been difficult. As I've said before, the plan gets 50,000 calls a day, with only about 6% of callers getting through at any one time. Some 8,000 pieces of mail arrive every



day. Many are complaints from clients about their inability to get through on the phone lines and the fact that recipients are not receiving their payments.

Three years ago the family support plan caseload was 97,000 cases. There are currently more than 150,000 cases, an increase of approximately 40% over the past three years, and the caseload is growing at an average rate of about 1,400 cases per month. The way the plan is currently structured, it is not able to keep up with the needs of the children and women who depend on it.

This poor access to the old plan by its clients was bad enough, but the old plan was also ineffective in enforcing support orders. Today defaulting payors owe children and women nearly \$1 billion in support payments. More than three quarters of the plan's cases, 77%, are not in full compliance. Prompt, regular payment of support obligations happens in only approximately 23% of cases. This is totally unacceptable, and our government has refused to accept it.

Let me be clear. The problems of poor client access to the old family support plan and skyrocketing support arrears are not problems that began in June 1995. They are problems our government inherited in June 1995. They are problems we made a commitment to fixing in the Common Sense Revolution. They are problems we are fixing in the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act.

Patching up the old plan won't work. Ontario needs, and we are providing, a new support payment program. On August 15, 1996, I announced the restructuring of the family support plan. The problems we inherited from the previous government are making the transition from the old plan to a new plan very difficult, but we are committed to moving ahead and putting a plan in place that really meets the needs of Ontario's children and women.

Throughout the transition we have made, and are continuing to make, processing payments our number one priority. In September a computer problem caused a delay in processing about 5% of family support payments, affecting 7,000 of the plan's 150,000 recipients. I publicly apologized to those recipients and immediately took corrective action. We fixed the computer problem, we increased telephone access, we brought in extra staff, and with our partner, the Royal Bank, we worked overtime to break the backlog that the computer problem created. We promptly got money flowing again to those 7,000 families.

We have also set up a dedicated team of experienced enforcement staff to respond to cases that members of this Legislature bring to our attention. As of November 13 the team has dealt with nearly 1,700 cases. Updates of that number indicate that we have dealt with, I believe, over 2,000 of those cases to date. Whatever the nature of a complaint or whoever makes it, we are acting swiftly and promptly to deal with it.

There is a common misperception about the old family support plan's operation that I would like to dispel. The misperception is that the regional office structure provided clients with easy access to the family support plan. This was not the case.

A key component of the new program that our government is putting in place is moving the regional office

operations to a consolidated location in Downsview. The reason for this consolidation is that the regional office structure that previous governments operated made no sense. Only clients living in the eight cities where the regional offices were located had counter access to the program. Fewer than 60 people visited each regional office on any given day. Many clients said they preferred to contact the program by phone and indicated that they went to the regional offices because of their difficulty in getting through on the program's telephone lines.

In spite of clients' preference for telephone access to the plan, previous governments did not make the necessary investment in a telecommunications infrastructure that would meet clients' needs. Under the new program that we are putting in place, our government is making that investment in telecommunications. We have almost doubled the number of telephone lines, from 15 to 27. The number of staff now responding to telephone inquiries is over 40, compared to 18 in August, when we began the transition. We are installing a state-of-the-art call centre capability that will give clients direct access to the plan and to a client service associate who can help them.

Under the old regional office structure that was previously created, the majority of client calls to the program was not received at the regional level. At central inquiry, agents received the calls but they did not have the capability to resolve the cases and the issues. These central inquiry agents then referred issues back to the regional offices. Under this unwieldy assembly-line system, at least three people — the central inquiry agent, the regional manager and a regional staff member — got involved before a client got any action on her or his case. It should be no surprise that we inherited a system where delays in responding to client calls were a routine occurrence.

1530

I might also tell you that what was supposed to be happening at the regional offices pertained to issues of enforcement, but because of the antiquated way that people decided to deal with cheque processing, most of the people at regional offices spent all of their time sorting cheques by hand. That, in a modern-day world where we do electronic banking, where we have immediate access and transactions could be processed almost instantaneously and certainly within 24 to 36 hours, was not what was happening at the family support plan regional offices.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** So what's happening now? What's happening to the cheques now, Charles?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Sudbury East, please come to order.

**Ms Martel:** I can't take this. You should talk to some of these children.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I can tell you that the regional offices were not doing the job that they were set out and constructed to do.

**Ms Martel:** So you laid them all off.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** We have eliminated this assembly-line approach to handling client calls and are replacing it with one in which highly skilled client service associates



will provide one-stop shopping for clients. We are nearly doubling the number of front-line staff, 97 client service associates compared to 40 —

**Ms Martel:** You cut them down by 40%, Charles. Why don't you tell the public that?

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. The member for Sudbury East, order.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** — under the old family support plan operation. Most of the new staff have been hired and are currently training for their new role. Their training will give them the skills to handle a variety of tasks that, under the old plan, several people had to carry out. And most important, they will have the knowledge, the tools, the technology and the authority to resolve client problems directly. These reforms and this change to better serve clients of the plan are long overdue.

We are also moving to reduce the systemic delays that we inherited in the receipt and disbursement of support payments. For example, the old program relied too much on the postal system to receive and distribute payments, with the government in the middle, transferring funds from payors to recipients. This further delayed payment processing.

**Ms Martel:** Who's going to pay all the bills brought in today, Charles? Are you going to pay them?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Requiring payors where possible to use electronic banking will eliminate delays caused by cheque handling and mail service.

To this government, providing one-stop shopping, making maximum use of technology and giving our staff the skills and tools they need to serve clients properly and effectively is just common sense. As we move forward in establishing a new and truly effective support enforcement program in Ontario, problems are surfacing that were hidden in the old regional office structure. For example, we found there were delays in registering court orders and in processing mail received from clients. We are acting promptly and decisively to correct each and every one.

**Ms Martel:** They're not being registered at all. You don't even have the staff to do that. Who are you trying to kid?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The operational changes will improve service to clients, but the foundation —

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: As you know, interjections are out of order. The member for Sudbury East has been in this House three minutes and she's made eight interjections. We are on rotation. She will have an opportunity to speak to this bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order. I'm sorry. I didn't hear the last interjections. I have asked the —

**Mrs Marland:** I would ask her to do so.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Mississauga, now you're interjecting. I've asked the member for Sudbury East to come to order. I'd ask her to do so again. The member for London Centre.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: There is no quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum, Clerk?

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Attorney General, please proceed.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The operational changes will improve service to clients, but the foundation for the kind of truly effective support enforcement program that our government is committed to creating is tougher enforcement measures. The Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act provides this foundation.

The Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act creates a new Family Responsibility Office. This new office will oversee the establishment of the new family responsibility and support arrears enforcement program, a program that will really meet the needs of children and women in Ontario. It will ensure that children and women in this province get the justice they deserve.

The new act contains three critical building blocks. These three building blocks are tougher enforcement measures; automatic filing with opting out; and mechanisms to enable participation by the private sector. The first building block in the new program's foundation is a series of new "get tough" enforcement measures. They will be among the most stringent you will find in any North American jurisdiction.

The fact that there is a large number of support orders in arrears is a clear indicator that far too many payors are not taking their support orders seriously or are actively avoiding paying.

I would like to highlight for the members some of the key enforcement measures that will be available through the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act.

It's interesting to know that over the last six years we have accumulated, on top of the \$300-million debt that existed in 1992, an additional almost \$600 million more; we're at \$960 million. If one takes a look at the existing family support act, you cannot find in that act enforcement measures that could possibly make that act succeed. That's why there is almost \$1 billion owing to women and children.

The first enforcement measure I want to talk about is the suspension of drivers' licences, which is dealt with in part V of the bill. The new Family Responsibility Office will have the authority to suspend the driver's licence of people who refuse to meet their family support responsibilities.

Payors in default will receive a notice that they have 30 days to contact the Family Responsibility Office to make payments or to arrange a payment plan to avoid licence suspension. If the payor who is in default does not make a satisfactory payment arrangement, or pay outstanding arrears, the Family Responsibility Office will advise the Ministry of Transportation to proceed immediately with the suspension of the payor's current licence, unless the payor receives an order from the court requiring the director to refrain from suspending the licence.

I would like to make it clear that licence suspension will not depend on the defaulter renewing his licence. Steps will be taken to suspend it immediately. Once a licence is suspended, it will not be reissued until all arrears are paid or there is a satisfactory repayment plan in place.



Suspending the licences of defaulting payors is consistent with trends in other jurisdictions. Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and more than 20 American states all have some form of licence suspension or licence withholding to collect support arrears. Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan have also introduced legislation to suspend drivers' licences to collect support arrears. In March 1996 the federal government announced that it is proceeding with a new federal licence suspension initiative with respect to federal licences and passports to collect support arrears.

Alberta's early experience indicates that licence suspension is a highly effective enforcement measure. After being in place for only one year, licence suspension in Alberta resulted in the collection of \$1.4 million in support payments that otherwise might not have been collected.

In Manitoba, when the first approximately 100 notices went out to people, 93% came forward and entered into plans to begin money flowing where no money had been flowing before.

I can assure this House as well that no driver will suddenly find their licence revoked without any warning. A payor who is in default will receive 30 days' notice and will have an opportunity to establish a repayment plan before a licence suspension takes place. A support payor who is in arrears will not necessarily have to make an immediate payment of all the arrears to keep a licence. However, a support payor who is in arrears will have to negotiate an acceptable repayment plan within a specified time period of the arrears, maintain payment of ongoing support and take responsibility for his default.

People who have child support obligations often continue to build up credit card debts while neglecting their support payments. Pursuant to section 47 of the bill, the Family Responsibility Office will have the right to report to credit bureaus the names of people who are not making their support payments. This will make it harder for them to add to their debt and will reflect negatively on their credit rating. This will be very useful in enforcing payments by people who are self-employed. It will also help prevent them from purchasing luxury items on credit before they have paid their child support obligations.

1540

Pursuant to section 43 of the bill, the new Family Responsibility Office will have the power to register support orders as security interests under the Personal Property Security Act. This will provide notice to commercial lenders that an individual has a support debt. When an asset is sold, child support will be given priority over subsequent registered and unregistered interests.

Amendments to the Creditors' Relief Act which are found in section 66 of the bill will give priority to all support arrears over other judgement creditors.

Defaulting payors are often helped in avoiding their obligations by third parties who shelter their assets for them. Through third-party enforcement provided in section 41 of this bill, the Family Responsibility Office will be in a position to ask the court to order production of financial statements and make orders against those who shelter the assets and income of defaulting payors for the purpose of avoiding support orders.

In implementing this important new enforcement tool, we are aware of the need to protect innocent third parties. Third parties will be added to a default hearing or will be required to file a financial statement only if the court is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so; that is, where there is some evidence of the sheltering of assets or income. Any order for payment that is made against a third party will be limited to the actual amount of the sheltering of income or assets and only when there is a finding by the court that the assets were sheltered. Financial information that innocent third parties file will only be used for the court process, including enforcement of any order made, and will be sealed by the court in order to protect confidentiality.

A loophole that has existed until now has allowed support payors to shelter funds in joint bank accounts with other parties. The old family support plan was not able to garnish these accounts. Under section 45 of the new legislation, the Family Responsibility Office will have the authority to garnish 50% of the money in a joint bank account.

Again, we have built in protections for innocent third parties. When a payor is in arrears, the Family Responsibility Office will send a garnishment to the payor and to the payor's bank. When there is a joint bank account, the bank will notify the Family Responsibility Office that the money is in a joint account and also notify the third party. Third parties will then be able to file a dispute if they are claiming ownership of the funds that the Family Responsibility Office has seized.

After receiving the money from the bank, the Family Responsibility Office will hold it for 30 days. If a third party does not file a dispute, the Family Responsibility Office will then pay the recipient the moneys that are owed. Where a dispute is filed, the court will hold the hearing and decide who owns the money. The onus will be on the third party to prove ownership. If the court finds in the third party's favour, the money will be returned to the third party. In addition, the other account holder can bring court action seeking repayment of seized funds from the support payor.

Another tough new enforcement measure covered in section 46 of the bill will involve the seizure of lottery winnings of \$1,000 or more. The Ontario Lottery Corp will deduct the arrears owed under a support order from the lottery winnings and pay the deducted amount to the director of the Family Responsibility Office if the payor wins a prize of \$1,000 or more.

We've also found that the definition of "income source" under the old family support plan was much too narrow. It meant that the plan could not get access to other sources of a payor's income through automatic deduction. Under section 1 of the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, we are expanding the definition of "income" to include other moneys which are in the nature of employment income. Income will now include all commissions, advances, severances and lump sum payments. This will enable the Family Responsibility Office to be much more effective in obtaining the money that is owed to children and to women by those who are intermittently employed or have non-standard employment arrangements.



Pursuant to section 54 of the bill, the Family Responsibility Office will have much better methods to trace and locate defaulting parents. It will also have greater powers to obtain information about their assets and income. This will mean that if a payor cannot be found, the Family Responsibility Office will have the authority to gain access to information in order to take effective enforcement action on behalf of children and women in Ontario.

Finally, people who do not pay their child support will be ineligible for Ontario government judicial appointments and appointments to agencies, boards and commissions. We will screen all provincial government appointments to make sure that they do not appoint people who do not pay their child support. This does not require a legislative amendment; however, I am highlighting this initiative to further illustrate that the government is taking the issue of non-payment of support very seriously.

The second building block, automatic filing with opting out, gives responsible people the choice of making their own private arrangements to provide support for women and children without the necessity of government intervention. By doing this we are honouring the following commitment made in the Common Sense Revolution: Parents who have reached amicable separation settlements and who have no dispute over support payments should be able to opt out of the government-mandated program. As a result, the Family Responsibility Office will be able to focus its resources and expertise on problem cases.

When children and women do not receive the money that is legally and rightfully theirs, they suffer. They experience hardship. Often they are forced into poverty and on to social assistance. Make no mistake: Our government believes that people who do not meet their family support payment responsibilities deserve the full condemnation of society.

At the same time, we know there are many responsible people in Ontario who abide by the law. They fulfil their support obligations. Their payments are never in arrears. They do not need to have government officials peering over their shoulders when they make their payments. Section 16 of the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act makes it possible for these responsible people to opt out of the program. This opting-out provision means that the expertise and resources of the Family Responsibility Office can be focused entirely on the problem cases: those where children and women are not receiving their support payments because deadbeat parents are not acting responsibly.

I know that some members of the Legislature and some advocacy groups have expressed concerns that this opting-out provision may put women at risk. I want to assure the members and the people of Ontario that we have put safeguards in place to protect vulnerable spouses. I am very aware that there are situations where a vulnerable spouse could be subjected to coercion or abuse or who, for a variety of reasons, may be in an unequal bargaining relationship. These spouses may want to remain in the program for a number of reasons, including their desire not to have contact with the payor or because they fear they will not otherwise receive payments from the payor.

To protect women in those situations, subsection 9(2) of the bill will give judges the authority to prohibit

spouses from opting out of the family responsibility program. In addition, any recipient who has opted out will be able to return to the family responsibility program immediately, at any time and for any reason.

As I previously stated, the caseload of the program is growing at an average rate of 1,400 cases per month. In order to enable the Family Responsibility Office to focus its resources and expertise on those cases which truly require the service, section 7 of the bill gives the program the ability to close cases where enforcement is unreasonable or impractical.

Enforcement will cease only where it is clear that recovery is not possible. For example, this will occur in cases where the support recipient continues to accept direct payment from the payors, thus circumventing the program, or in cases where the support payor is serving a term of incarceration greater than five years and has no assets available to satisfy the support obligation. This measure will eliminate the wasting of resources on cases where there is virtually no possibility of recovering the arrears.

The third and final key building block, covered in section 4 of the new legislation, provides powers to the Family Responsibility Office to enter into private sector partnerships. This is consistent with our government's commitment to the people of Ontario in the Common Sense Revolution to review all core businesses and to enter into partnerships with the private sector where they can provide services more effectively and efficiently. Such partnerships might include, for example, using private collection agencies to collect the money that defaulting payors now owe to Ontario's women and children.

In the debt collection business, the older the debt, the tougher it is to collect it. There are two major reasons for this: The person owing the money cannot be located, or has no income or assets that can be used for payment. Using these criteria we estimate that about half of the nearly \$1 billion in arrears, owing, may be collectible. We intend to collect as much as we can for the rightful recipients.

As I've indicated, in addition to these legislative changes we have already begun to deal with the problems that have characterized the family support plan since its inception. We've taken steps to improve service to our clients. Our goal is to answer calls promptly and to get support moneys into the bank accounts of families as quickly as possible. The program has continued to process and distribute support payments at the level established before the consolidation began. In the first two weeks of November, we have paid \$20 million to children and women in this province. On November 18, we sent out \$1.9 million in one day, processing cheques for almost 6,104 people.

**1550**

In closing, the old family support plan is broken. It is inadequate for the children and women of Ontario who count on it. Through the three critical building blocks contained in the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act — much tougher enforcement measures, automatic filing with opting out, and private sector partnerships — our government is sending a very



clear message to people who default on their family support payments: Not paying child support, not complying with a court order is no longer acceptable in Ontario.

In the Common Sense Revolution, we promised we would crack down on defaulting parents who are not fulfilling their family support obligations. By not doing that earlier, we ran the debt to women and children to \$1 billion. We made that promise to the children and women of Ontario. I am happy to announce that the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act keeps the promise we made and makes the Family Responsibility Office one of the toughest plans in North America. I believe it will make this office effective for the first time in the history of family support collections.

**Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex):** It's certainly a pleasure to rise today and speak on Bill 82, a bill to establish the Family Responsibility Office. It's certainly a pleasure to join the Attorney General in the discussion on this important initiative on his behalf.

As many members know, issues centred on family support are mainly and often very difficult, due in part to emotionally charged circumstances and the personal sensitivities encompassing the issues. For these reasons, I do not dismiss the frustrations which often accompany change, frustrations which I recognize as being very real.

As I alluded to in my opening remarks, I am pleased to speak to this bill standing in the name of the Attorney General, and particularly so because the bill not only reflects commitments identified in the Common Sense Revolution but, most important, it attempts in part to fix a plan that's in need of improvement and a plan which can work better for the children and women of this province who truly need it.

The government is creating a Family Responsibility Office, an office that will provide Ontario with some of the toughest support payment measures in North America, measures which are drastically needed, given the nearly \$1 billion of child support payments which remain outstanding. Fully some 78% of the plan's cases are not in full compliance, a scenario which is tragic for the women and children owed support in this province.

Logically, one might conclude that a plan of this nature would run effectively and achieve its desired outcomes. However, this has not been the case and achieving the desired outcomes has best been described historically as problematic, problematic from the perspective that over the past nine years three out of four women never received family support they were legally entitled to.

I think it's also important to reflect for a moment on the historical experiences of the previous government with this plan, but I do so not maliciously, as I think we can assume that the NDP's intentions were both forthright and directed towards women and children for the best reasons. For that reason, I think it's important to set aside any political biases that we might have in that regard.

Having said that, I've read Hansard to review some of the circumstances in the questions posed to Attorneys General, as we have heard in the House concerning family support for the past few weeks. In 1991 Attorney General Hampton, in responding to questions, emphasized solutions based on enforcement targets and public awareness. In 1993 Attorney General Boyd, in a similar

vein in responding to questions, emphasized solutions based on enforcement and collection. As I said, my comments are not intended to be malicious, but ones which reflect the ongoing problems that have been experienced in this particular plan. I must say from personal experience, since being elected in June 1995, inquiries concerning family support problems have been the most predominant of all inquiries in my constituency office, paralleled only by those inquiries concerning the Workers' Compensation Board.

The point I wish to emphasize is that the issue of enforcement, collection and securing timely support payments for women and children in this province has been problematic from the outset and certain remedies have been pursued. Having said that, I wish to bring us back to the present and Bill 82 and clearly emphasize the government's objective with respect to this bill, which is (1) to crack down on defaulting parents and (2) to give the system some real teeth with respect to enforcement procedures; as I said earlier, the toughest in North America.

Toughening enforcement measures is the next logical step in the reform process, a process which will enable the Family Responsibility Office to focus on specific problem cases and at the same time provide opportunities for private sector involvement in examining ways to collect arrears. As the Attorney General said earlier, the focus is on tougher enforcement. People who do not meet their family support responsibilities will be subject to a number of enforcement measures. These include driver's licence suspension by suspending drivers' licences for those who refuse to meet their family support responsibilities. A payor who is in default will receive adequate notice and opportunities to establish a repayment plan before a licence is suspended.

**Credit bureau reporting:** The office will report to credit bureaus the names of parents who do not pay their child support. This will affect their credit ratings. It will be very useful in enforcement against self-employed individuals. It will hinder them from purchasing luxury items on credit before they have met their child support obligations. Currently a number of banks and mortgage companies refuse to approve loans until arrears are paid.

Third is obtaining financial statements and making orders against persons who help support a payor avoid enforcement by sheltering their assets. In addition, the garnishment of joint bank accounts, the expansion and definition of income sources, improved tracing and location of defaulting payors as well as the registration of support orders under the Personal Property Security Act will enable and assist in the better enforcement through this office.

As the Attorney General alluded to, the seizing of lottery winnings of more than \$1,000 to pay outstanding child support is a needed approach. As well, private sector partnerships, including the entering into partnerships with the private sector to collect outstanding support payments. Of the nearly \$1 billion in arrears owing, the government estimates as much as \$400 million is still collectible.

The government will also screen judicial appointments and appointments to agencies, boards and commissions to



ensure the province does not appoint people who fail to pay their child support.

One of the important features, I believe, in this legislation is the automatic filing, with the right to opt out. Under the new legislation, automatic filing of support payment cases with the office will continue. However, recipients and payors, where both agree, will now have the choice of opting out of the system. This recognizes that responsible parents who continue to pay their court ordered or agreed upon support do not need to be supervised by the government. It also ensures that the Family Responsibility Office will be able to concentrate effectively on cases in default.

One of the important features of this bill states that recipients who opt out may immediately return to the system at any time. To protect vulnerable spouses from coercion, abuse and unequal bargaining relationships, judges will have the discretion to prohibit parents from opting out of the system.

There is another important player in this program, and that is the federal government. Child support enforcement by provinces can be strengthened if the federal government makes changes. The Ontario government will continue to push Ottawa for changes to allow the provinces on-line access to federal data banks for current information, including income tax information, employment insurance data and pension plan information, to assist in locating the assets and incomes of people who owe child support.

To conclude, the transition period has been admittedly challenging, but I believe the Attorney General has responded responsively by developing a long-term strategy to address family support payments. Under the old system, only 6% of the phone calls to the plan got through. We are now processing 5,000 transactions per day, a 25% increase in productivity. By example, these efforts resulted in the payment of approximately \$20 million in payment to women and children in this province over the first two weeks of this month.

I believe the Family Responsibility Office, which will provide one-window access to information and service to its clients, accompanied by a \$1-million investment in technology, will serve women and children in this province very well. I fully support this bill and appreciate having had the opportunity to speak on this issue for a few minutes this afternoon.

1600

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** It gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak today on Bill 82, a piece of legislation to reform the family support plan which, everyone knows, even my colleagues in the opposition, was not working well for the people it was intended to help.

The family support plan, which was developed in 1992, had as its objective a very worthy one: helping women and children who were not receiving the support needed to financially assist them. While its goals and objectives were very honourable, it was fraught with problems. The current caseload of approximately 150,000 cases has approximately 1,400 new cases every month. The arrears total almost \$1 billion, which have accumulated since the support and custody orders enforcement

office was set up in 1987. Persistent problems with the clients' ability to contact the plan and receive service have been ongoing since 1987.

Children and women are suffering. Due to the tremendous backlog in cases, children and women are being denied the support they need and which they are entitled to. Nearly half the parents registered with the family support plan are not paying any money at all to their children. They have abandoned their responsibility and they have abandoned their children.

I have heard members of the opposition accuse the Attorney General of neglecting his responsibility to help those women and children who need assistance, and I say to all of them that this new legislation does just exactly what women and the public want us to do. It builds on previous governments' attempts to help those women and children by adding stronger enforcement measures for parents who do not meet their obligation. It focuses its resources on those parents who are not meeting their responsibility and allows responsible people who have reached amicable separation settlements to opt out of the plan.

Parents who adhere to their responsibilities and want to ensure that their children are looked after do not need to be supervised by the government. By allowing them the ability to opt out of the plan, the government's resources can then be focused much more effectively on those cases which are in default: on the women and children not receiving the support they so desperately need and on those deadbeat parents who refuse to own up to their responsibilities.

While the new legislation allows the right to opt out for responsible parents, it also allows a judge the discretion to prohibit parents from opting out in cases where they may be suspected of coercion, abuse and unequal bargaining. It also allows re-entry into the plan in the case where defaults begin to occur again.

We campaigned on a promise to crack down on defaulting parents and give responsible parents the ability to make their support payments directly, without government interference. This new legislation introduces some of the toughest enforcement measures in North America. It includes the suspension of drivers' licences for those who refuse to meet their obligations. Credit bureaus will now be contacted and given the names of parents who do not pay their child support, thereby curtailing their ability to buy luxury items while their children suffer needlessly.

The legislation permits government to seize lottery winnings; to include commissions, salary draws, advances and lump sum payments as income sources; to tap into 50% of joint bank accounts of the default parent and the new partner for support arrears. It allows us to include private sector partnerships to collect outstanding support payments and provides better methods to trace and locate defaulting parents.

We've all heard from women who have tried to contact the Family Support Office only to find that they couldn't get through. Fifty thousand calls are made to the Family Support Office every day. Of these callers, only 6% actually get through. Of the 8,000 letters received every day, the majority are complaints from clients about the lack of telephone service. It's obvious to anyone that the



plan hasn't been working well and is not serving its clients. It needs radical change. These problems didn't occur overnight. They have been ongoing since 1987.

The Attorney General has introduced a number of changes to improve service for its clients and this bill does just that. Unfortunately, though, as with any change, there is a transition period in which things just don't go as well as we hope or expect.

Our goal as a government is to help those women and children by making it easier, not more difficult. By consolidating services under one roof, quicker and more effective service will be delivered. This legislation is a good piece of legislation. How can anyone oppose a piece of legislation that supports women and children, that includes tougher enforcement measures, that asks all parents to own up to their responsibilities by supplying for their families?

I submit that this bill fulfils, as promised in the Common Sense Revolution, to crack down on deadbeat dads and help these women and children who have been denied the support they need. I hope all members of the Legislature will vote for this bill and for the women and children who have asked for our help.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** The bill is timely and the situation is timely. If I could look at my constituency office and see how many calls are coming in on various problems, the number one right now is unquestionably on family support problems. They have taken over from workers' compensation and other items, although the health questions are coming in quite rapidly as well.

I'm just looking at some cases here, and the frustrating part is that we have got both spouses who are agreeing that the money should be coming from one spouse to the other, but somehow it's not making it there. Ordinarily, in months gone by, the problem was one spouse wasn't paying and the other would phone to complain. It all goes back to the fact that the government is so obsessed with cutting funds so it can fund the tax cut that it has cut these regional offices off before they centralize and find a different way of handling these.

Now, let's put aside whether it's wise or not to close the offices. I think it is a bad decision to close the regional offices, but put that aside for a moment. If you were going to close them, at least it would have been a good idea to get something else in place first. We have absolute chaos out there.

When you can bring both spouses, who have perhaps been on less than good terms in years gone by, on the same side on an issue, you know you've got a problem, and in each one of these I'm looking at here that I just got faxed over from my constituency office, that's the situation. One spouse is paying, shows the stubs that the amount is being taken off, and the other spouse is saying, "I'm not getting the money." This bill may be of some help in that regard, but the whole office has to be cleaned up, and very soon, in addition to this bill.

**Ms Martel:** In response to the comments that were made, let me say the following. First of all, I heard any number of members from the Conservative Party say this plan had historical problems, long-standing problems, the

plan wasn't fixed, it wasn't working, it has to be fixed etc.

Let me remind everyone in this House that under 42 years of former Conservative governments, the Conservatives did nothing — nothing — with respect to court-ordered support payments. There was no plan under 42 years of Conservative government in this province, and while there may have been problems under the plan established first by the Liberals and then amended by us, it sure has been a heck of a lot better than the complete lack of action taken for 42 years under former Tory governments.

I find it just appalling that the minister can stand in his place today and talk about problems with the plan and completely ignore the serious crises that women and children are in in this province right now, directly as a result of your decision to lay off 290 staff, directly as a result of your decision to close the regional offices, all to save 35% so you could hand some money back to the Treasurer so you could finance the big tax cut.

We have raised, day in and day out, cases of women and children who are not receiving the regular support payments they used to. The London paper today has five more cases of women who used to receive regular support payments and now are not since the regional office has closed and since this Attorney General laid off 290 staff. For you to come in the House today and to say, for example, that we have so many more new front-line staff is just a farce. Why don't you tell the people that you are cutting the staff by 40% and that the new front-line staff are going to have to carry out the work of two and three people who used to do that work before? We are in a crisis and this government has done nothing to resolve that for women and children.

1610

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I'd like the House to recognize a couple of people who are in the House who are interested in this topic. One is Regina May from Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears. Heinz Paul and his daughter are here representing Families Against Deadbeats to support this legislation. Hopefully members will recognize those people.

Much of the criticism of the two-minute responses given by the members before me was with respect to this changeover, and there's no question that there are going to be problems with this changeover.

**Ms Martel:** Problems? It is chaos. Come on.

**Mr Tilson:** Well, we're trying to solve a problem. Whether you recognize that or not is your business, but the fact of the matter is we have a problem with respect to the whole administration of the family support plan.

One of the items — and I only have a very short period of time. I remember the Attorney General, when we were in opposition — he was the critic for the Attorney General, who is now the leader of the third party — asking: Why do you put everybody in it? Why would you have every last person in the plan? There's a whole pile of people in this province who actually agree on things, but you want to deal with everybody.

**Mr Gary Carr (Oakville South):** You were in cabinet. You sat right here and did nothing.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.



**Ms Martel:** The minister is doing nothing. A crisis for you? look at the bills I got last night from Waterloo.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Sudbury East, come to order. Member for Oakville South, come to order.

**Ms Martel:** Who is going to pay the bills from the women last night who are not getting their payments? Who is going to pay, Gary? You?

**Mr Carr:** — the Deputy Premier, the most powerful man in that government, and he couldn't do anything.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Dufferin-Peel, proceed.

**Mr Tilson:** Thanks very much, Madam Speaker, for getting order.

**Ms Martel:** You did nothing for 42 years. It was the Liberals who brought in the plan.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Sudbury East, come to order.

**Mr Tilson:** I simply would like to congratulate the Attorney General for taking the bull by the horns and solving this terrible social problem. I believe that problem is going to be solved.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments?  
*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Take your seat. All the members of the House, please come to order. In particular, the member for Sudbury East and the member for Oakville South, come to order, please.

**Mr Carr:** Floyd, you were the most powerful man, Deputy Premier.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Oakville South, come to order now.

**Ms Martel:** Talk to them. Talk to the women we talked to in Kitchener last night.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Sudbury East, come to order.

Okay. You're using up your debate time. Thank you.

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** Madam Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me a couple of minutes in response. I'm very pleased to see that the member for Dufferin-Peel has told this House, has told the people out there that indeed there is a problem and they are trying to do something about it. The problem is that they haven't recognized the real problem that is out there. The problem is that instead of trying to solve, they are creating more crises, they are creating more problems and they are doing nothing about it.

What has happened in the House today is a result of the actions of the government. That is why the actions of today bring to the attention of the House the need to do something, not simply say that they are doing something. It is to do something about it. When citizens of Ontario are forced to come to Queen's Park to get action, then it means the system is no longer working for the people of Ontario. We on this side, the government on the other side, it reflects on us that we are not doing the job. Today they happen to be in power and it is most unfair that they have been preaching restraint with compassion, doing more with less. The people of Ontario don't want to know about that. When it comes to services, especially health services, they want to have a response. They want to be able to access those services. That is why what is happening here today is because of the problems we have.

While I'm pleased that the government recognizes there is a problem out there, I exhort the members, especially those not in cabinet, to get after Mike Harris, the leader, and the ministers, and say: "We have a problem. Let's show the people of Ontario that we care and we are doing something about it."

**The Acting Speaker:** The Attorney General may sum up.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I have listened with interest to the comments of my colleagues, and I think it's important to note that there are 200 people now working very diligently at the family support plan office where, on Monday, \$1.9 million in cheques was disbursed to over 6,000 people.

We had a problem that the member from Sudbury raised about Sudbury Hydro not sending its cheques in, and there was a problem. The problem was that they didn't want to send the cheques to a post office box, as the plan had instructed.

**Ms Martel:** They can't, Charles. Why don't you tell them that detail. Every week they send them by courier.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, the member for Sudbury East.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** When the next month came along, those cheques were sent to the post office box and by electronic banking they were disbursed within 24 hours, so there are some real improvements being made.

This bill will facilitate a part of the problem that nobody from the former government wants to talk about, and that's the fact that we had a plan that accumulated a debt of \$960 million as of today because the plan didn't have any enforcement mechanisms and tools to meet the modern-day reality. What we are trying to do is to create a plan that provides better service to clients, that has access for clients to the plan and that has an ability to enforce orders that courts are making. We haven't had those tools in the plan to date, and we intend, by this bill, to try to collect some of the money that for the last six or seven years has increased by \$100 million a year. That's money that women and children didn't receive.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time is up.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Just take your seat for one moment.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Here you go again. You wonder why the opposition is angry at you. It is that kind of nonsense that has got you in trouble.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Nickel Belt, come to order, please.

**Mr Tilson:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order: During the two-minute responses, I must say I had about 10 seconds. The Attorney General had about the same amount of time for responses. The rules are quite clear, specifically rule 20(b): "When a member is speaking, no other member shall interrupt such member, except on a question of order."

My point of order is that three members particularly from the third party are continually interrupting members on this side of the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** You're quite right; that's what the rule book says. However, I will point out that during your two-minute comment period, members from both



parties, including yours, were heckling each other at the same time. I am sorry, but to all the members, when you have a two-minute response, that is your time. I can't stop the clock during that time. I have a choice to be on my feet to call the House to order. You're losing time. So it's up to you to try to keep order during the two-minute response, and I implore you to do that for the rest of the debate.

1620

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** I rise today to speak to Bill 82, which with typical Tory flourish and exaggeration has the lengthy title of An Act to establish —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Take your seat for a moment. Members from both sides of the House, please come to order.

**Ms Castrilli:** This act bears a lengthy title, which we've become accustomed to with the Tories in their haste for exaggeration: An Act to establish the Family Responsibility Office, protect the interests of children and spouses through the strict enforcement of support orders while offering flexibility to responsible payors and make consequential amendments to certain statutes. But the issue before us today is really one of child and female poverty, a problem that is growing and requires our urgent attention in a democratic society that believes in fairness and justice for all its residents.

Let me say at the outset that the best remedy for child poverty is parents with jobs and parents who take their child support obligations seriously. But the fact is that many parents face poor employment prospects while others simply refuse to pay child support even when they can. The effects on children can be devastating, as it can be on their mothers. Therefore there must be a policy of zero tolerance for parents who default on child support. Children deserve and need to get financial support from their parents. If parents don't pay, everybody else does.

Improvement to the current system is greatly needed by the thousands of women and children in poverty because of the failure of individuals to honour their support obligations. My party supports any measures that will enhance the ability to enforce support orders that are intended for families, to care for their needs. While these may be physical in nature, they often have profound psychological and social consequences when denied or delayed.

We agree that the family support plan needed an overhaul. Enforcement mechanisms were weak, computer deficiencies were all too common and women and children suffered as a result. But the most significant problems were a lack of resources and a massive case-load. Let's look at the facts: 97% of parents ordered to pay child support in Canada are fathers. Of these, about 76% of support orders are in arrears. Ontario fathers currently owe about \$1 billion, which grows by millions of dollars each year. It costs the province approximately \$300 million per annum in social assistance payments to families who are not receiving the support payments to which they are entitled by law.

A more specific picture is given by the staff at the family service plan in Ottawa who write, and I will quote this letter if you don't mind:

"We would like to draw your attention to the recent government proposal to revamp the existing family support plan. The plan is primarily staffed by women, and the main goal of the plan is to collect child support payments from defaulting payors, and funnel the money to women and children. At a time when the federal government is recognizing the importance of child support, the Harris government is planning to close the regional offices of the family support plan, centralize and downsize, claiming that the existing plan is a failure. This once again is an attack on the most vulnerable in society, women and children.

"Even though current case workers in the plan have over 1,200 cases each they often give out their private numbers to clients so that they may have direct contact. They often take the time to speak with clients directly and assist them at the counters of the regional offices."

Bill 82 is hardly an endeavour to protect and enhance the interests of children and spouses. It is a cost-cutting initiative by a desperate government determined to find the cash to pay for its tax cut. The minister has mishandled the restructuring of the family support plan with such proficiency that he has become desperate to deflect criticism.

This bill attempts to do just that by providing the appearance that the so-called reorganization is well-thought-out, controlled and, yes, even righteous. It is an attempt to divert attentions of the members of this House and the public from the very real problems experienced within the family support plan created directly by the government's thoughtless rapid move to downsize, decentralize and consolidate the plan. It is an attempt to divert attention from the very real harm being inflicted upon women and children by the delays caused by a rushed, ill-conceived implementation.

The family support plan will now be called the Family Responsibility Office, or FRO for short. But does this name change create a better system for women and children? Does it achieve more support for women and children, or does it instead indicate that it will seek to place the full responsibility on the backs of families? Women and children are wondering whether this is an intentional act by a callous government or whether it is simply another accidental casualty. Clearly, there is a dangerous lack of vision and compassion for the most vulnerable in our society.

The key issue here is that when child support isn't paid, women and children suffer. They suffer by not being able to afford to heat their homes, to put food in their stomachs and place clothing on their backs. In many cases, these families are forced to seek help through social assistance in their constant struggle against poverty. This government does not realize that its hurtful actions and policies have rebound effects both psychological and financial. This issue demonstrates once again the government's attack on the most vulnerable. A generous person might say this attack is not intentional, but it is nevertheless real.

In the weeks since the government's hasty closure of all family support plan regional offices, MPP offices and the media right across the province continue to be overwhelmed with cases of clients desperately seeking



information on the status of their cheques and their files, many of which are months in arrears due to computer problems, backlogs and reduced staffing.

Let me read to you just one of the letters that have been written to the minister from women desperate for help. Carolyn Ioannoni from Niagara Falls writes to the minister:

"I have not received my October payment yet, and it is weeks overdue. The attempts I have made to get through to an assistance line and actually speak to a person have been futile. I have been trying to get through for over a week. This is both time-consuming and frustrating, so now I'm coming to you for assistance.

"To make matters worse, my ex-husband is now receiving notices from your office stating that he is in arrears. His wages are automatically garnished for his child support and his work has deducted this support, as it does every month, and sent the payments in weeks ago. I hope the changes you are making, geared to make this plan more effective, come into effect soon. Until then, I am asking for your help in finding my children's support."

The minister is trying to convince us that his restructuring initiatives are an attempt to eliminate waste, save money and improve efficiency, yet instead, the family support plan dismantlement project is proving to be a political and financial disaster that shows how not to ram through ideologically driven policies to fund a lucrative tax cut.

Those directly involved in the administration of the plan give the most damning evidence of this. Staff at the office of the public guardian and trustee — no less than the public guardian and trustee — wrote to us on September 17:

"This is regarding the closure of regional family support plan offices which has resulted in a massive domino effect of bumping and displacement in the Attorney General. Not only have the closures resulted in job loss, but a loss of confidence in the government and its services.

"Where are all our tax dollars going? The government closes the family support plan offices, which was generating income that went back into government treasury, sends the surplus employees away, realizes there's a backlog and hires an outside agency to tackle the backlog. What happens when the new proposed plan doesn't work? They spend our tax dollars to decentralize again. The government is playing games with our lives."

That is from the office of the public guardian and trustee.

In addition to all this, the minister has chosen to be extraordinarily partisan in his management of this issue, stating as he did in the House on October 2 that the problems with the family support plan have been ongoing since 1987. But his partisanship, unfortunately, has been based considerably on incorrect information, particularly with respect to the historical problems of the family support plan. I know all members of this House will want a factual account of the history of the family support plan. Informed decisions require us to have all the facts at our disposal. The public of Ontario deserves and expects informed decisions from all of us.

We begin with 42 years of inaction by the Conservatives, successive governments that did nothing to ensure that women and children received the payments to which they are entitled. To help overcome this deficiency, the Support and Custody Orders Enforcement Act was brought in by a Liberal government in 1987. It allowed the province to do a number of things to enforce support and custody orders, due to the huge number of parents who were in arrears or had defaulted on their child support obligations.

1630

After 42 years of inaction it's obvious there would be a huge caseload, and the support and custody orders enforcement agency, or SCOE, developed a backlog. So in February 1990, the then government approved a plan for the automatic deduction of support orders from the income of persons ordered to pay support. However, this plan was never implemented because of the election call that came that spring.

Following the election, the NDP introduced the Family Support Plan Act, or FSP. This built on the Liberal policy and provided for automatic deduction of support orders from income. Support orders would be filed with the FSP office and sent to the employer of the payor. The employer would then be obliged to deduct the payments owing from the wages of the payor. The FSP came into effect on March 1, 1992.

Unlike the proposed Liberal plan, however, the NDP legislation did not provide for a mandatory removal from the plan of those cases that have been in good standing for a defined period of time. Cases in good standing would not have been included under the Liberal plan. The inclusion of these cases by the NDP added about 25% to the caseload, to which my party objected strenuously at the time.

As well, under the Liberal plan enforcement by the family support plan would not have taken place until notice of default was registered. Under the NDP legislation there was total administration of the program by the family support plan from the moment an order was made. For this reason, my party also had serious concerns about the staffing and administrative resources this would require, and that the NDP may have gone too far without committing enough resources to make the plan work.

Ultimately, it turned out that we were correct, as the family support plan has been consistently plagued by bureaucratic delays and mistakes. Many defaulters are successfully avoiding the system. For instance, federal sources of income were not garnished.

Therefore, let's clear up the minister's statement that the family support plan has been in a mess for 10 years. The fact is that there have been problems with the enforcement of support orders for many years. These problems are due directly to the fact that 75% of people required to pay child support choose to default or are in arrears. The Liberal government tried to address these issues in 1987, but SCOE was only an enforcement office. It was not a centralized agency to collect support payments directly from wages, and therefore cannot be compared to the family support plan.

When it was clear that the support and custody orders enforcement was not working, the Liberal government did



decide to introduce a plan. After the election the NDP proceeded with a plan but made it more bureaucratic and wider in scope than the Liberal plan would have been. As a result, it was unable to cope with the caseload which has since plagued it.

Therefore, I remind members of the House that the record shows that the family support plan has not been in a mess for 10 years. How could it be, when it was only operational since 1992? The system in place now is quite different from what existed 10 years ago, which was nothing. And that is exactly what successive Tory governments did for single parents and children in need of assistance for more than four decades: nothing.

The current system is in need of reform. As I have stated, approximately three quarters of family support orders in Ontario are in arrears. In addition, as of last December only 24% of cases were in full compliance and 31% in partial compliance. This means that a whopping 45% of the cases involved no remittance whatsoever. This amounts, as I said, to about \$1 billion in outstanding child and spousal support while the caseload increases by 1,400 each month.

This situation forces the government to provide about \$300 million a year in welfare payments to keep many families afloat, yet the total annual budget of the FSP was only about \$23 million.

Let me quote the minister in order to illustrate the enormity of the plan's workload. He stated in this House on October 2: "With a caseload of approximately 148,000 cases and an average of 1,400 new cases every month, the family support plan is ill equipped to handle its caseload. The plan receives up to 50,000 calls a day to its offices. Of these calls, only 6% of the callers actually get through. Almost 8,000 letters arrive daily, most of which are complaints from clients about the lack of telephone service."

While the minister acknowledges the problems, what is really interesting is that he responds to this inequality between workload and resources by slashing two thirds of the staff, closing all regional offices in the province and relying on a 1-800 phone line as the sole information link for desperate parents. Does that make sense?

The resulting turmoil was simply passed off as the cost of change, but it represents much more than that. It is indicative of how this government manages change: without plans, without forethought, without due consideration to the consequences. This is a very scary realization when one considers that the same government is now preparing to ram through the amalgamation of Metropolitan Toronto cities, has already rammed through VLTs and is planning the elimination of school boards.

Again the response of those in the field is instructive. Staff at one regional office wrote:

"Though there has been no increase in staff over the past four years...receipts have risen from \$166.4 million in 1991-92 to \$420 million in 1995-96, an increase of 252%. We have to ask what would be the commonsense thing to do? The answer is to build on the strengths already apparent in the system — a well-trained, committed staff, who know their business, before eliminating 335 jobs, closing offices in seven smaller cities, and denying clients what little direct access they have to the

program. Why not improve access to the local offices by reducing caseload to a manageable limit? Were this the case perhaps the phone lines would not be quite so jammed."

It has become obvious that this restructuring has been a massive flop, as one serious problem has followed another. There have been ongoing delays of six weeks or longer in sending out cheques to mothers and children; a huge computer glitch resulted in the delay of 7,000 cheques and is yet to be resolved; desperate parents are becoming frustrated with futile attempts at getting through to the family support plan on overloaded telephone lines; there is inadequate staffing to answer questions and resolve problems if and when they finally get through; the results of office closures and delays in service are chaos for the system and reduced support for a quarter of a million children.

Let me tell you about a case in my own riding of Downsview. Cynthia Italiano is another example of many who are experiencing similar difficulties. She was having some difficulty collecting support payments from her ex-husband, who was \$1,900 in arrears. She has exerted great energy attempting, without success, to discuss the issue directly with someone in the ministry because of the problems with the new phone system. Nevertheless she found out that the ministry had cashed \$900 of cheques from her husband but failed to forward them to her until just recently, after inquiries from my office. She writes:

"I do not mind telling you that because of the delay in payment, I have been finding it increasingly difficult to manage. I am not financially able to support my family without such payments. Risking sounding very hostile, I thought that support payments going through the government were supposed to support the mother" and the children.

Recently my colleague from Cornwall also rose in this House to explain how one of his constituents, Sarah Lenneau, has been waiting for months for the family support plan to update her support payments through garnishing her ex-husband's salary. Ms Lenneau and her ex-husband have been willing to enter into a direct payment agreement, but the family support plan has discouraged this. So instead of being able to pay her bills, her account now stands at \$1,800 and rising. To add insult to injury, she has been told that she will not be able to receive any additional information or have her payments corrected until at least December, since the family support plan was in the process of moving offices and files were inaccessible.

1640

These problems directly impact on family incomes and their ability to purchase food and clothing for the winter and to keep a roof over their heads. That is the real tragedy. There are no excuses for bureaucratic delays that prevent parents from receiving the money collected on their behalf by the FSP.

The minister also skates on thin ice when arguing the cost-effectiveness of this plan. Among the many hidden costs of restructuring are overtime payments to outside contract staff, many of whom are not bonded for confidential work, and the use of the Royal Bank, hired to administer the transference of cheques etc, to address the



backlog, as the system was unprepared to deal with the new format; at least \$1.5 million to cover the cancellation of regional office lease agreements; extensive renovations under way at the new central office, which will cost \$966,000, not including the costs of moving; the cost of having non-bonded ministerial staff conduct confidential case work in a weak effort to protect their boss's reputation.

Furthermore, according to the transition plan, the Downsview office was to be fully operational by November 25, yet it is still not fully operational and likely will not be until at least January. What will women and children do in the meantime?

In September, the rapid closure of the family support plan offices resulted in a deluge of child support cheques flooding the Royal Bank, the institution chosen to manage the funds of the plan. The backlog that was created forced the government to ensure that the cost of extra banking staff was covered. What is unclear is exactly how much money is still being held by the bank, how much is dormant, and who is receiving the interest from it — interesting questions that apparently are not easily answered.

Furthermore, members should know that the family support plan posted modest successes. For instance, in fiscal year 1995-96, the family support plan returned approximately \$49.8 million to the treasury of Ontario as recovery of support arrears paid out in welfare or family benefit payments. It costs approximately \$23 million to run the program, leaving a net return of more than \$26 million.

One is therefore forced to wonder why the urgency in overhauling a profitable plan. Why make hasty decisions that cause such troubling problems? Why fire existing, knowledgeable staff simply to rehire in other jobs and outside of the regions where the women and children need the help? What about public service in our communities and community-based solutions? What about face-to-face contact and its importance in resolving human trauma?

The telephone hotline will be busier as parents are forced to obtain information over the phone from one central office, and there is no assurance that they will get the assistance they need. We are even told that the office may have hired an answering service. How are parents to get any help? Remember our writer from Niagara Falls? She spent more than a week attempting to get through on the hotline without success. Imagine: every day for a week and no results.

The Attorney General family support plan 1996-97 business plan stated that "many of the FSP's existing regional offices are located in small, closely knit communities who deeply depend on government as a provider of support, services and employment. The family support plan's new business approach, coupled with other government program approaches, will result in some very difficult times for these small communities, accordingly a carefully planned government communications strategy should be undertaken." At least they acknowledge the very real negative impact that these changes will make.

Yet staff at the office of the public guardian and trustee stated in a letter to members of this House that

"the displacement process will cause a further backlog in the system which the client and the public will inevitably suffer from because the new staff will have no knowledge of the file history, policies and procedures of the office. This will also cause and has already created frustration from our clients, family members, caregivers, agencies and nursing homes we presently deal with."

Staff at the Ottawa family support plan describe the unique service that the regional office provided:

"The government's business plan purports that this centralization will 'permit clients to directly access staff of the program.' One clearly has to ask the question how when the only access will be via a telephone toll-free number. The present system with eight regional offices and a central inquiry system is not perfect. In fact employees of the plan welcome legislative changes that will enhance enforcement tools, and computer technology. These are changes employees have been seeking in order to provide better client service.... Clients clearly need better access to the program but is the best solution to close the regional offices and eliminate all face-to-face contact with clients?"

The facts dispute the government's claim that the plan is a failure. In fact, it can be said that while being perpetually underresourced and understaffed, the family support plan has achieved some successes. I find it unbelievable that this government would first lay off staff, close offices, and then seek solutions. Now we find out that they let out the request for proposal on a contract to analyse the family support plan restructuring just two weeks ago, and they haven't even considered such basic items as the type of computer technology that they will need and that will not be in place until June 1997.

It seems this government really has no capacity to approach the business of the province. Slash first, ask questions later. Just one of the many examples is its management of colleges and universities. The government announced \$400 million in funding cuts, then released a discussion paper, and finally created a consultation panel. What is there to discuss after the funding cutbacks have already impacted on the manner in which the institutions deliver services and the quality of education our students receive? This is a backward, undemocratic approach to governing which puts no value on consultation and planning, and we see it again in the family support plan.

The Ottawa family support plan office even submitted options outlining extensive recommendations for improving the system while reducing costs. Yet the government abruptly chose centralization, but without appropriate transitional planning to prevent the widespread service delivery problems that families are now experiencing.

It is no wonder that experienced personnel concluded:

"As women, government employees and taxpayers of Ontario, we are insulted by our treatment by this government. We were not consulted with regard to these drastic changes, and we only became aware of them through leaked documents to the media. We ask that you give voice to our concerns over the impending closure of the regional family support plan offices, and force this government to put the needs of women and children of Ontario first, before the bottom line."

There is no more damning indictment of this government's course of action.



The minister in this House has acknowledged problems with the transition, yet has assured us that his ministry has moved quickly and decisively to correct them. Despite these assurances, problems continue to exist every day. The new 1-800 service that the minister tells us will replace adequately the regional offices and deal effectively with public inquiries is so heavily inundated with calls that people are finding it virtually impossible to get through.

I wonder why the minister has stood by and allowed such chaos in the family support plan. The system has deteriorated to such a point that his political office has had to resort to dealing with the problems. This seems to be a costly method of reforming the system.

Clients cannot even obtain copies of their personal files, as is their right under Ontario's freedom of information legislation. Thousands of irretrievable personal records previously housed in regional offices are being haphazardly shipped and stockpiled at the new Toronto location and clients are being told they will not be able to access information until the boxes are unpacked, whenever that may be. Without proper computers, it may be that information will not be available to them till long after June 1997.

If this government is not prepared to provide the family support plan with the resources needed to deliver its services to clients, how can we be assured that it will provide the resources needed to enforce the new regulations? And if the government is not prepared to devote sufficient resources and staff to ensure the plan functions adequately on a daily basis, this government cannot boast, as it does, that it has the toughest support payment enforcement legislation in North America.

1650

There is no question that action is required. Let me also say that there are some merits to the proposed legislation which can be supported. While the legislation will not do all it says it will do, we applaud the expanded definition of income to include new categories of payments such as lump sum, disability pension, workers' compensation, commissions, bonuses, annuities, dividends and income tax refunds. It's a welcome effort to obtain more accurate assessment of total income on which to base payments.

The bill also acknowledges the fact that there are parents who take their financial commitments to children seriously. It allows payors and recipients to agree to opt out of enforcement by the Family Responsibility Office and to enforce the support orders themselves. While we agree that it is essential to reduce the case work where possible, we have serious concerns with this step, however, as it creates the real possibility of coercion by one partner who would rather avoid dealing with a government system. Women who depend on payments by their spouses or ex-spouses are in no position to bargain. We caution the government that it must act to ensure that women and children are not victimized once again by the system.

Our Liberal plan would have removed from the plan payors who had been in good standing for a defined period of time. We still believe this is the smart way to go. The decision should not be at the discretion of the

parties. Instead, it should depend on the payor being in good standing for a required length of time and that determination should be made by plan administrators. Any default on the part of an opt-out payor should automatically trigger reinstatement into the plan by plan administrators. This is in the best interests of the women and children involved.

I also endorse the new enforcement measures as outlined by the minister in July. Stakeholders demanded action in this area from the previous government but got nowhere.

I fully support suspending the driver's licence of defaulters; reporting defaulters to credit rating bureaus; garnishing joint bank accounts up to 50% if one of the holders of the account is a defaulting payor; ordering third parties who have a financial relationship with a defaulter to provide financial statements and allowing orders to be made against such parties if they were involved in sheltering the payor's assets or income from enforcement of the support order; registering support orders as security interest under the Personal Property Security Act.

Allowing for the seizure of personal property upon default is also a good measure, as is intercepting lottery winnings of \$1,000 or more and requiring support arrears to be paid from them before the winnings are distributed to the defaulter; and giving support orders priority over other judgement debts.

While it is outside the scope of this bill, I would urge the government also to look into the issue of the enforcement of custody orders and visitation orders for non-custodial parents, a growing problem in our society.

As for this legislation, we strongly recommend that it receive committee scrutiny in the public interest. Given the huge interest in this issue that we see in the House every day, that we see in our constituency office every day, and the hardships which have been caused, it is likely that a large number of citizens and organizations are interested in giving their input. Their advice can only strengthen the process and this legislation. It is incumbent on us to seek advice from those directly in the field and directly affected before making a decision. Only in this way can we perform our duties as informed members of the House and responsible legislators.

I'm sure that everyone in this Legislature wants to ensure that children and women are not victimized. It is up to us to develop the best possible legislation to protect their rights and to provide them with the necessities of life. I know we all believe this to be our duty as legislators and I therefore urge everyone here to promote public hearings and to insist on a system that will be fair and accessible and that will not penalize those women and children who are least able to defend themselves. This is our challenge and our promise to them. We cannot let them down.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** I want to begin by congratulating the member for Downsview for what I think is a very clear and a very thorough discussion of the kinds of concerns with which we approach this issue of family support and the debate about this legislation. The legislative proposals themselves may in fact be less of a focus of our debate than



the whole matter of the mess the family support plan is in and whether the proposals presented in the legislation are going to be adequate in any way to deal with the mess of the family support plan.

I'm wearing a ribbon today which was presented to me earlier this morning in recognition of the fact that this is the UN Day of the Child. It seems to me that it's an appropriate day on which to begin the debate about the family support plan, and I want to take from the words of the member for Downsview the most significant of statements, the reason we are all so concerned and the reason this debate is so important. That's the fact that when support payments are not made, women and children suffer. I think it's important that throughout this debate we all remember that our concern is for children and to make sure that children get the support they need.

I'm not going to spend a lot of time on the specific proposals of the legislation. The member for Downsview has already indicated that we are supportive of a number of the tougher enforcement measures set out in this bill. We have believed for some time that it's necessary to provide more power to act against the self-employed delinquent payor, the payor who can afford to pay and is not paying, the real deadbeats, and to make sure we have the powers to be able to act effectively. We believe that the enforcement measures proposed here are a step in that direction.

The member for Downsview has also indicated our very real concern with one aspect of the proposals here, put forward to deal with a part of the mess that we acknowledge does exist in the family support plan but that we must understand has become so much worse in the last few months, with the closure of the regional offices. There's no question that as the minister puts forward the plan for opting out of the automatic deductions, that is intended to relieve some of the pressure of the 25% addition to the caseload that is created by people who were in compliance. I think the member for Downsview has very accurately stated our concern when the previous government introduced the automatic deduction plan, that although we supported the idea of garnishing, we were concerned that those in compliance were included in that plan.

We do, however, have very real concerns about the way in which this opting out provision is included in this legislation. I heard the minister today speak about safeguards. I don't see the safeguards in the legislation. I hear the concerns of custodial parents who feel they could be intimidated, that they could be coerced into not having the payments garnished. I think there was a sound basis on which to deal with the problem of those people who are in compliance and who don't need to be clogging up the system, that 25% additional caseload that doesn't need to be there. That way was to ensure that people who are in good standing and have been in good standing over a long period of time are not in the automatic deduction plan, but that they are automatically back in the plan if there is any default at all. I still hope, because I think that this is a real concern, that the government will revisit this part of the legislation.

I'm not going to go any further into the history of the plan either. I do find it rather strange that with all the

questions we've raised in this House, with all the concerns we've raised day after day, the minister kept echoing his refrain that this plan had been in a mess for 10 years. As the member for Downsview has just said, the program has only existed for four years when it was put in place in 1987 by the previous Liberal government, the first time ever that there had been a plan put in place and a capacity to deal with those who were defaulting on their child support payments.

But there is also no question that there was a problem with the plan. As the member for Downsview said, when that program was put in place in 1987, because there had never been a program before there was instantly a huge backlog, a huge caseload. It has been difficult to deal with that, no question about that at all.

I have a memo dated September 1996 from Linda Waxman, who's the acting director of the family support plan, in which she outlines the problem.

"The plan's caseload of 146,00 is growing by about 1,400 new cases a month. At any one time, we have only been able to answer only about 6% of the calls. Some 8,000 pieces of mail come in every day. Not surprisingly, many are complaints from clients who have not been able to contact the plan by phone."

1700

I want to re-emphasize the statement that was made here and note it carefully: 8,000 complaints a day because clients couldn't contact the plan by phone. It's a fact that only clients in the eight regional offices across the province have ever had access to direct counter service, any alternative to using the phone. So you get 8,000 complaints a day because clients can't contact the plan by phone, and what is the government's response? The government's response is to shut down the regional offices where the clients could go in and get counter service, direct personal service to deal with the problem. You have to ask, where is the sense in that? Some 8,000 people can't get anybody to answer the phone, so you shut down the regional offices where they were getting direct service. Obviously you're going to make the problem much worse.

I think the government at one point did see that there was some value in counter service. Their original plan would have required some 50 people in government offices tucked away somewhere. I'm not sure they'd have ever been accessible, because nobody knew where these 50 people would be, but at least they thought they might need to have some direct service. We haven't seen those 50 people. If they exist, we don't know where they are. Certainly that was not a well-thought-out part of their proposals.

There was also at one time a plan to charge \$2 a call to anybody trying the 1-800 number to get help. Thank goodness we've not seen that particular proposal carried forward, because that would have been a disaster for all those clients who have to call repeatedly, some as many as 14 times in the course of a month, just to get an answer to their phone call.

The transition fact sheet from the government makes it clear that "only 60 people a day were going into each regional office." These were people who couldn't get through by phone. They were going into regional offices.



There were eight regional offices. That means some 480 people a day were going into regional offices. The government clearly thought that 480 people a day weren't enough to be bothered giving them that kind of service, so it would just shut the regional offices down. Maybe they thought that the regions had a benefit that people in the greater Toronto area simply didn't have. They note that 70% of the enforcement workload was in the greater Toronto area but only half of the staff was there.

Maybe it's not possible to have direct office service in the greater Toronto area. Maybe it can never be truly accessible. Maybe counter service isn't the best route. But why impose the problems of access in the greater Toronto area on the rest of the province? The regional offices were working outside the greater Toronto area. They should have been left alone, and then the greater Toronto area problems could have been addressed as a different and unique issue.

But the problem is not only that we have had a mess over the last months but that we are going to continue to have a mess because the 1-800 number is never going to work satisfactorily. That really is the bottom line. Even if you finally do add enough staff — and the minister keeps saying they're adding more staff — to finally answer the telephone, it is still not going to work, because people get frustrated when they can't get through. They get angry when they don't get a return call. They get angry when the information they get on the automated information system is different from the answer they get from a real person when a real person finally returns their call maybe two weeks later.

But the primary reason that the 1-800 number won't work is because it is simply too easy to make bureaucratic, dismissive responses when you never have to deal with the client in person. The common reference to the 1-800 number now for clients, for people who have tried to use it, is that it's 1-800-WHO-CARES, because they don't believe there is a caring, responsive person at the other end of that line.

The regional offices were more than just a counter service. The regional offices did get to know their clients. They didn't have to deal with the routine problems, because those could be handled by phone. They were pursuing the compliance issues. They were actively going after the deadbeat parents, and they were making a difference.

I just want to quote some of the statistics from the regional plan to testify to the success that was being experienced in the regional offices.

"Before March 1992, approximately 93,000 cases were filed and enforced. During the past fiscal year, that number has increased to a total caseload of 142,138 cases; a net caseload increase of 1,092 cases per month," cases filed and enforced.

In 1987-88 the family support plan collected \$19.9 million. For the 1994-95 period the plan collected well over \$367 million and was able to return \$45 million to the treasury in recovered welfare funds.

It's ironical that the family support plan was designated a gold star organization by the Ombudsman's office in public acknowledgement of the plan's ongoing commitment to excellence.

The problem wasn't with the regional offices. The regional offices were providing real support to people and they should have been left in place. They should now be reinstated.

There was a warning given to the government long before the government decided to shut down regional offices. The warning came from taxpayers — clients — in my home community of Thunder Bay on February 23, 1996. I'm not going to read the entire concern that was expressed by these people because there isn't time. They pointed out that the work that was being done by case workers prevented hardship for families because case workers were able to intervene and get a much more immediate resolution of the problem than if a family were having to deal by phone with somebody who had no connection with that case or that particular client.

They make the point that if the cases are not reviewed and given immediate attention, they fear that many recipients will give up and look to social assistance for survival. That is a concern all of us have. We know in that same Thunder Bay branch they were able to collect \$1 million in support payments per month, and that was money undoubtedly saved from social services.

A number of us, most members of both opposition parties, have been bringing to this Legislature for weeks now the specific cases, the dozens and dozens of cases that have been called into our constituency offices. At any given time over the course of the last two months my office will have had 30 outstanding cases: parents who are supporting their children who aren't getting the payments made; and as the member for St Catharines has said, a new twist to the whole problem of the family support plan, those parents who are in good compliance, the payors who are having their payments deducted regularly and who are angry because their payments are not getting to the children for whom they are providing support.

That's the kind of mess that has built up: 30 cases on average in my constituency office in Fort William. The member for Windsor-Sandwich is going to speak this afternoon. She's been seeing 30 cases at any one time outstanding in her office. The member for Hamilton East would have as many as 56 outstanding cases at any one time.

The minister has said today, "Not to worry." He's been saying that for two months. He's saying, "Don't worry, we're sending out the cheques now." Well, I called my office today, just before I came into the House to speak on this bill, to say: "Is it all right? Are things fixed? Is the problem gone?"

Here's the memo that was sent to the family support office this week, as we send them on a regular basis. Here's somebody who was to have received an increase in support payments in June and still hasn't received the increase. Here's a payor who had his income tax refund garnished on September 6, 1996. He's not in arrears. He doesn't understand why he's having to pay more than he should be paying. Here's a recipient who last received a support payment on October 10, which just covered here September support. To the best of her knowledge, the payor is having his payments deducted regularly and the support is being remitted to the family support plan.



She's obviously wondering when she and her children are going to get the money. Here's a recipient who's been experiencing delays since the Thunder Bay family support office closed. To the best of her knowledge, the payor is paid once a month and his employer is remitting monthly. Another one last received support moneys October 31, 1996. The list goes on and on for pages, and this is today. These are the cases that have just come in that are outstanding still today. So the mess is still going on.

There are such significant implications for parents. That's why we have been so concerned, because if the money is not getting to the parent who's providing support, it's not getting to the children.

My colleague from Port Arthur on October 22 read into the record in this House a letter from a Thunder Bay resident: "Winter's on the way and my daughter needs warm clothing. I'm relying on the child support plan to purchase what she needs for the upcoming cold season." It is the children who pay the price of the problems that have been created in this plan.

1710

At one point in time a representative for the Attorney General's office said, "We're going to pay compensation to any parent who has suffered financially as a result of the delays that have been created in this plan." I don't know how they're going to pay compensation, because they have absolutely no accurate records to allow them to make the payments today, let alone to track the loss of income to families as a result of the delays and the total chaos that has been created in the last months.

There is no question that the whole transition was handled in the most incompetent way possible. Our member for Ottawa West outlined it in a question that he asked in this House in September, outlined exactly the problems that had been created in the mismanagement of the closing down of the regional offices, the fact that the process was kept secret from regional staff. Way back in February clients in Thunder Bay were warning the ministry about the implications of closing down the family support plan offices, yet the regional staff were not being given any accurate information as to the ministry's plans.

There were insufficient banking arrangements made for the new system, resulting in thousands of cheques not being cashed or deposited by the bank in a timely manner. The new computer system was not fully operational, and this was back on September 24, when the member for Ottawa West said:

"Fourthly, you have been haphazardly storing and misplacing parts of thousands of client files.

"Fifthly, you inadequately communicated to clients of the plan how the new system would work. They didn't know what was happening. They didn't even know where to send their cheques."

It's a fact that a large part of the mess was created because of total and absolute mismanagement. There was no plan in place, there was no transitional program, and we saw last week that in fact there are still files stacked in unopened boxes. We are not through the transitional period yet; the mess is by no means over.

But my greater concern is that even once the mess of an incompetently handled change is resolved, the plan is

still going to experience huge problems, because the government's proposals are simply not going to work. They are bringing in measures that they believe will toughen enforcement, and we support those measures with the one caveat that I've outlined. We think that the enforcement measures may help, but they're only going to help if you can find the non-payors. You can't do that by telephone.

All of the service improvements that the ministry has outlined are technological. They're all dependent upon being able to save money by putting new technology in place. The technology isn't really new; it's more telephones, more telephone lines and hopefully a few more people to answer the telephones, but it is all at-a-distance service. It doesn't involve any direct contact with people.

Who's going to go out and visit the employer in Thunder Bay to try and track that payor who's in default? Who's going to find out what's really going on? Is that person really on sick leave? Is that really why they haven't been able to make their payments for the last months? Has he actually taken off and never been seen again? Do we need to do something a little more active if we're ever going to get support payments to that child? And are employers really going to give this kind of confidential employee information over a telephone on a 1-800 line, let alone to an automated service?

Suppose that some altered way of making payments has to be worked out, because there are often circumstances in which the court orders have to be altered, for good reason, with both parents in agreement. Who's going to go out and negotiate those kinds of changes? Who's going to be the concerned mediator? There's some talk about compulsory mediation. Who's going to be the concerned mediator if there's nobody who's had any contact with the client or the family, nobody who has any knowledge of the people or the situation?

Are they going to set up some kind of a technological conference call, use the ultimate in the new phone technology and still have no direct human contact? I find it hard to imagine that would work with any but the most sophisticated parents, and even then, it's not likely to work when the mediator is some unknown person whose only knowledge of this family comes from a file history.

The goal here surely is to get the support that's needed for children, and yet it was not even enough of a priority for this government to take the time to examine what would really work. There was no money to implement really effective solutions. It was absolutely clear from the beginning that this government's plan was to take money out of family support, not put more dollars into it.

The family support plan, just like every other ministry, was told that it had to do its part for the tax cut; it had to do its share to find the \$5.5 billion that was needed for the tax cut. I think the family support plan was given instructions that at the end of its so-called reform there had to be a 15% reduction in overall costs. Don't try to tell us that this was about reform, that this was about improving the plan that is so necessary to parents and to children. This was about cost cutting. That's where it all started, that's what drove the changes and that's why the kinds of changes we're seeing are changes not for the better but for the worse, why they are changes that can't possibly make things better for children and for families.



The family support plan was asked to do more with less, like every other arm of government, and once again the sad result for women, for children, for parents, for families, is that there is only going to be less. There will be less service, there will be less enforcement and, tragically, there is going to be less support for children.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** It is my pleasure to speak today on Bill 82. I do so with great concern for the number of people in my riding of Windsor-Sandwich who have been dealing on a daily basis with all the failures coming out of the family support plan. The content of Bill 82 I think in its intent is good. There are a number of areas that certainly would move in the right direction. What I must stress to the government members today in the House is the folly of going forward with this kind of legislation when we can't even clean up our own act as it is today.

We have been trying on a daily basis to provide more and more information to the Attorney General's office to clean up the cases that exist in my Windsor office. Currently, we're closer to about 50 families we are dealing with, and that's just in the riding of Windsor-Sandwich, families who are just about out the door. If they're renters they are in hock. They are going further and further into debt because we simply cannot clean up the system the way it is. So while the Attorney General takes his time to introduce legislation to actually give some teeth to laws and make those deadbeat parents pay when they should pay, what they do at the same time is eliminate the very staff people who are there to implement and to get these parents to pay.

There have been innumerable errors and failures on the part of the Attorney General that have led to an absolutely chaotic situation for many, many families. Here we sit in this House in the middle of November. We're about six weeks away from Christmas. This couldn't come at a worse time for families and for parents, predominantly mothers, who are trying to cope without having their bills paid, let alone think of how they're going to manage through the holiday season with their children.

The worst thing I suppose we could say to the government is, "We told you so," but unfortunately that's about the only thing that rings true today, and that is, "We told you so." We asked the minister, the Attorney General, on his feet months ago, "Confirm for us that you have intention to close the Windsor regional office." At that time, he never did give us an answer. He always said that a decision had not yet been made; that he would be doing what was in the best interests of the children. Let me say that if I had an employee like the Attorney General, I would do one thing, and that would be to fire him, because his decisions have been an absolute disaster for many, many people across Ontario.

The people who used to work in the Windsor regional office really were exceptional. I take great offence at the way they had been treated for months. First of all, if your intention was to fire them all, why didn't you just do it? You dragged it out, month after month after month, so these people didn't know if they were coming or going. You let it go for months. The very conscience that you could do that to people really is totally inappropriate for government.

Second, you never bothered to look at the stats that were coming out of the Windsor regional office; that is, that their compliance rate was well above the provincial average. For the month of September 1995 it was at 73%. The success of the regional office in Windsor was because it's right there in the community for all regional areas. We have major industry in our town, so they were right there with hands on with major employers, Ford, GM, Chrysler, Hiram Walker. Our office was right there in the midst of them, so they dealt one on one.

**1720**

The staff in the Windsor office knew all the contact people right there on the front line with people who were going to put these payors on the rolls. They knew them; they knew them directly. What you've done, Attorney General, is fire them and what you did instead was hire clerks out of the Toronto office. I don't know if they're on yet. If they are, they're certainly not trained. You hired people at a lesser wage, people with no experience, and the situation grows worse and worse.

There were a number of journalists in my community trying to have a good look. The fact is that they couldn't believe an Attorney General would be this shortsighted. One led by Grace Macaluso started a year ago when Mike Harris's Conservative government slashed welfare and family benefits up to 31%. What this journalist wrote is that they decided to do an in-depth look at what the effects of these cuts were. What they discovered was that across Windsor-Essex county, women were not only the most profoundly affected but also the most vulnerable to poverty.

Let me give you several examples of what my office in Windsor has dealt with with the Attorney General's office. Now, I'll tell you that some of the people who work in that ministry have been very gracious with us. We know them on a first-name basis. We think they're trying to do their best. The reality is that the Attorney General has failed completely and his staff simply cannot pick up the pieces. They have asked us time and time again to continue to fax all these problem cases to the Attorney General. I don't know where this fax line is going — off to outer space? — because we never get a response. So we call them again and they say, "Please fax us the list."

Well, two weeks ago the story changed. They said, "Fax us your worst cases." How do you make the distinction between what one bad case is compared to another bad case? The reality is, they're all bad cases. What we saw last week is that it is going into some black hole somewhere. You have file boxes sitting unopened, computers not plugged in. You're looking for people to sort out your computer problems. If I had an employee like the Attorney General, I can only tell you I would fire him.

Let me give you examples of what we faxed over to the Attorney General.

Robert, who works in one of the companies in the mould industry, had arrears which were being deducted at a certain rate. Now that he's up to date, the Attorney General continues to draw huge amounts as though he were still in arrears. The situation has not changed; it's been months.



Ruth, who has been dealing with this, is now \$5,000 behind in payments. Her last payment was September 30. None of this is new to the government and the Attorney General stands and continues to say, "Please fax me this." How many times do you want to receive a fax about the same cases? We're up to 50 cases now which have been sent time and time again and have never been rectified.

Let me tell you about Ruth and her arrears of \$5,000. As of November 20 — this is going back from September; we called on a weekly basis from September through November — she is still \$3,750 in arrears. When she finally got a cheque on November 6, it was a cheque in the amount of \$1,250. We don't know who's doing what there or how these arbitrary sums of money are being determined to make some sort of payment. The reality is that they're just not being done properly.

Let's meet Cynthia, who hasn't had a payment since September. As of November 20, she is now \$1,430 in arrears. Now, the employer for her ex-husband is making the deductions. As many of the members here in the House, it's not that the deductions aren't being made on the employers' part; it's something in the middle, and that thing in the middle is the Attorney General who has failed to get those moneys through to the families who need them. Cynthia is still \$1,430 in arrears.

There was quite a story in our local press about a woman named Pam whose last payment was in February 1996. I would like all of us to see how we would possibly manage when our income has been halted since last February, how many of us would be in what predicament today. She's found a new address because her ex-husband moved, found a new job. We've had this new address for months. We've tried to get the new address to the Attorney General but he has failed to get that into the system, and now this person is \$4,000 to \$5,000 in arrears.

It's not that we haven't tried to contact the office; that 1-800 number simply doesn't work. Here's a woman, Pam, who's valiantly tried on her own to get through and would continuously hit the redial button and left it there for 23 hours before it finally went through, just for her to get through the maze. You can't possibly be proud of this record, to those who are listening today.

Then we were asked to forward the list of the worst. So we had to somehow find a way to pull the worst of the 50 cases in our riding office. We have Nancy, who hasn't had a payment since September. We have someone named Tom whose arrears have been paid up but they're still deducting 50% of wages from him.

It's most interesting that many of the fathers we hear from are very concerned that their children get the money. Predominantly here it is women who are receiving the payments and fathers who are making the payments. The fathers are angry and don't understand why this is happening. They don't have more money to send money twice to the mom. That's all the money they have, and it's simply not getting through to the children.

We have Kenneth in my riding who shouldn't be in arrears but is listed as being in arrears, so he is having huge amounts of money —

**Mrs Boyd:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There's no quorum in the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Would the Clerk check for a quorum, please.

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**Mrs Pupatello:** We have a very sad case with Patricia, who is in my riding. Patricia hasn't managed to get payments through from the Attorney General — she's been waiting since September — and is now facing the threat of her hydro being shut off, her bills not being paid and now possible eviction because she cannot pay her rent on time.

The terrible story of Christine in my riding: She has NSF charges now that total \$300 because all her bills were being paid through pre-authorized cheques. Well, they can't stop the cheques, so the money continues to come out and now she is going to have charges of \$300. Even when she eventually gets the money that is owed to her, where the Attorney General has failed, she still —

**Mr Laughren:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This is a very good speech that we're hearing, and I think there should be a quorum to hear it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Call in the members, please.

*The acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**Mrs Pupatello:** I can understand some of the MPPs from the Conservative Party not wanting to hear the kinds of details we're facing in our ridings. The reality is that we have just finished a constituency week where a number of MPPs spent, I hope, a whole week at home in their home ridings. What did you see when you were at home in your constituency? Did your phone ring like ours has not stopped doing? Has your phone kept ringing as well with a number of cases of women who are threatened with eviction because they can't pay their bills, because your Attorney General has failed? I tell you again, if this gentleman was working for me he would have been fired a long time ago.

1730

On this note, let me tell you that the only thing that is driving this government, whether it be the FSP or whether it be Bill 82, the only thing that is driving you is the tax cut. You have to find money and you have to find it fast. You are decimating the health industry, scaring them along the way, but you are destroying our health care system; you are destroying all of the things that work.

We'll acknowledge that the family support plan needed to be fixed and it could always have been improved. That's like saying that you've got a cut on your finger and in order to fix it you're going to chop off your arm. That's the kind of thinking that is driving this government. You're simply driven by the fact that you have to find savings. But even under the guise of finding savings, you're not doing it in a very thoughtful and planned way. You're doing it far too quickly.



Just as we see that the hospitals cannot possibly take the reduction in funding in the time frame that you've given them and patients are suffering, the same is true with the family support plan. Not only are you trying to find funds fast, but you are not allowing the staff people to plan for you. You have decided that you're just going to holus-bolus shut down every regional office in Ontario. As a result, you have an office in Downsview that's not even open. You have computers that aren't even plugged in. You should have been highly embarrassed last week when you were found out to be so completely unorganized.

There's no business in Ontario that would continue to function if it was driven and organized in the way that your Attorney General is doing, and the same is true with your health system. There's not a business in Ontario that would operate in this way, because you cannot withdraw that level of funding that quickly. If there has been a criticism that every one of you has heard in your own riding, it has been this: It is too much and it is too fast. All of you have heard this.

I remember reading in my Windsor Star the story of your MPP Mr Boushy from Sarnia. What did he say? "The health minister's not my favourite minister." Why is that? This is the same gang that decided to jeer and heckle me every time I asked about mothers who can't find doctors to deliver their babies. This is the gang that went home to their ridings during constituency week and what were they getting at home? They were getting calls from mothers who cannot find doctors to deliver their babies. And do you know what happened? He changed his tune because your Conservative member Mr Boushy said publicly and on record in the Sarnia Observer that the health minister is not doing right by the doctors, is not taking care in the appropriate manner and solving the issue.

Let me tell you that we had some very unusual happenings at home. I have a letter that I probably shouldn't read into the record, but I can't help myself, it was so well done. This gentleman, a doctor, is the president of the Essex County Medical Society. Here's a gentleman who is always very reasonable, has always tried to work with everyone regardless of the circumstance. This is how he was driven. He writes at 1:49 am, so you can imagine the kind of schedule he keeps that at 10 minutes to 2 in the morning he faxes out this letter to the Minister of Health, Jim Wilson:

"Dear Minister:

"As a sensible, calm and reasoned physician who has attempted to guide his medical community through unstable times, always focusing on achievable goals, attempting to avoid rhetoric, I finally have become appalled and even incensed at the recent puerile behaviour of your government. The bullying, threatening tactics directed towards the CPSO and through them towards the physicians of Ontario are more befitting of a childish reactionary and does not reflect the needed statesmanship required to lead us out of this medical crisis. When long-established rules of behaviour and civil liberties can be challenged in an attempt to intimidate a whole community, when short-term insults are deemed more important than long-term solutions, when this government cannot

see beyond knee-jerk desperate hysteria, then I respectfully suggest that the leadership within this present government takes a long introspective look, and if indeed it finds itself as hollow inwardly as it appears outwardly, then it should resign."

That is signed by Dr Ian McLeod, the president of our Essex County Medical Society. Let me tell you, when I saw a copy of this letter, I knew that even Dr McLeod has had enough. He has tried valiantly over these last months during his term as president to deal in a reasonable fashion with this government, but this is just one more example where he too has been driven finally to say: "You're not interested in quality. You're not interested in really helping children through this bill. Whether it's the health of children, whether it's support for children, that is not what's driving you."

It is a very simple ideology. You're here to service the tax cut and you've got to find that money somewhere. And where have you decided to find it? The Attorney General has been told to cut staff, get rid of them, get rid of people who knew the clients at Chrysler, Ford, GM, Hiram Walker, who knew them personally, who could put people in the system out of the system, who could make the changes that were required. But those people are gone. You've laid them all off. And what did you hire instead?

I likened it in the last speech about a month ago to Jabba the Hutt from the movie Star Wars, this big blob with this great big centre vortex that just draws everything to Toronto, and that's what you've done. You fire in Windsor, you fire in Thunder Bay, you fire in Hamilton, and then you hire clerks in Toronto, inexperienced people. Moreover, you install a 1-800 line which no one is there to answer. You put these people through a maze so that one of my women who can't get her money keeps a redial for 24 hours and still can't get through on the line, and after 24 hours of a busy signal finally gets thrown into voice mail, never to get a return phone call.

I cannot believe there is a member on the government side who has not had this experience in his constituency office. I cannot believe that you haven't been faced with this. Instead, I think you simply are not giving information to your people in your communities.

It's very much like our member for Durham East: He doesn't want to hear the negative; he doesn't want to hear that the people in the town he lives in don't like what his government is doing. He claimed to his local daily paper: "Gee, no one's giving me any encouragement. I get zero support from my constituents." I say, does it occur to the member for Durham East that maybe he's on the wrong track, that maybe he should go back to his party and say, "Maybe we're doing too much, too fast"? That is the most common phrase heard in my riding. That is the most common phrase that's heard across Ontario everywhere I go.

The simple reality is that you're driven by a tax cut because you feel that money in the pockets of people somehow is going to do more. We have yet to find conclusive evidence of this in any state where it's happened. In fact, your Reform leader, Preston Manning, has been lamenting in the press lately, "Gee, I'm just not getting anyone to fight on this tax break stuff," and his



little campaign on a national level doesn't seem to be going anywhere. Your Reform leader in Ontario I hope will soon see the same thing. You have not delivered the promised cuts on the timely basis that you said, and even though you continue to repeat that you're doing what you said you were going to do, you're doing a whole lot more than you said you wouldn't do.

The one that seems to tickle you the most is your cuts to health care. When you go back to your Niagara region, you should ask your hospitals in Niagara if they can take the level of the cuts that the Niagara hospitals have been taking. I attended some classes last week while I was home during constituency week and spoke to nurses, many of whom are working in the system and back at school. These women could tell me stories that would curl your hair about the terrible condition they see for their patients. We have evidence that Sean Conway reported in the House and to our caucus of hospital administrations telling families to hire a private nurse and bring in —

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Standing order 23(b) states that the member in debate should speak to the matter in question, speak about the bill that we're discussing here. She's talking about everything, and now she's speaking about the subject —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. It is a point of order. I was listening very carefully to the member and I'm sure she's bringing her debate into that forum right now.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I appreciate that.  
1740

It seems to me that when we get into the Niagara-Kitchener-Waterloo area some members opposite might get a little nervous, and rightly so. You should go home and speak to the people in your ridings, and not just speak but listen to what they're telling you.

We finally have some Conservative members who are prepared to put it on the line and say, "Don't do this to my community." We have the member for Sarnia, who stood up and said, "The Minister of Health is doing wrong by our doctors and wrong by our patients." There are a number of other examples of that. Our member from Kitchener, certainly one of the members from Kitchener at least, could say that St Mary's General Hospital isn't the hospital that should be closed, that in fact it was the hospital that saved his life. This is one more example of total mismanagement. If the Attorney General worked for me he would be fired a long time ago. Not one business in Ontario could be sustained if it operated on these kinds of conditions.

You actually shut down regional offices before you had a system in place to resume those payments. You have \$1 billion somewhere out there. The parents who are calling my office, do you know what they're asking me? Those who are having their moneys withdrawn from their cheque that aren't landing in the hands of their children are saying, "Who's collecting interest on this money?" Where's that going? Is this some other method of collections for you so you can finance your tax cut? Because you didn't tell your constituents during the campaign that

when you deliver your tax cut you'll have to borrow the money to do it and incur greater debt.

I came upon a piece of research we had asked the services to get us, the debt-to-GDP ratio, because the Tory members seem to think they're just these wonderful money managers. Let me tell you that you are the worst in history. Never in Ontario have we had such terrible mismanagers of money, a Conservative government. I will tell you this: The Conservatives I used to know would be embarrassed to think that the Reformers who are in power today are so terrible at managing the Ontario government.

The 1996 debt-to-GDP ratio is 31.47%, the highest in Ontario's history. What's so interesting about that figure is that this is a year and a half into your mandate. You've had a disaster so far. If anyone cares to look, I'll be happy to fax you a copy of this. The debt so far has gone up by \$10 million. This, while all the cuts are going on. So your ratio has gone up, your debt to GDP. Your interest payment as a ratio to GDP is at 2.63%, the highest it's ever been. God, it's higher than the NDP government's. I want to send you a copy of this.

You dared to run on a platform — I certainly heard all your rhetoric — that you were going to be so fiscally responsible. Let me tell you, so far you are the worst in history. This after a year and a half in government, where you've cut in every ministry, even where you said you wouldn't. You are going to announce even further reductions. Your bureaucrats — the Minister of Finance said: "Stop. You can't deliver the tax cut." But you delivered it anyway, because that's part of your rhetoric. You had to deliver something even if you have to borrow the money to do it. So the reality is that while you're making these massive cuts you're doing nothing about the debt, and we thought that's what was driving you.

Just for information — I think some people at home will be curious about this, so I'll probably mail it to them as well — in 1994, 27.5% was the debt-to-GDP ratio; in 1995 it increased to 29.42%; and in 1996, where you are wholly responsible for your cuts, for your spending, for your layoffs, for your joblessness in the civil service, 31.47% is your debt-to-GDP ratio. You can't possibly be proud of this record.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** What's the net?

**Mrs Pupatello:** Yeah, really. When I'm at home and I see that even Dr McLeod is driven to the point where he's got to tell the minister, "This kind of behaviour is totally unacceptable of government."

When I look at the Attorney General and I ask, how could you close the regional office? It's not as if you didn't know. You were given these numbers before. You knew before. You had all the charts, you had all the graphs. You knew what was working, you knew what wasn't working. Why didn't you fix what was broken instead of chopping off the entire arm in order to service a cut on the finger, which is exactly what you did?

Here we are, very comfortable, all of us, sitting in this House, because we're not worried about our cheque arriving in our bank account on time. We're six weeks away from Christmas and we've got a number of children who still haven't managed to buy the supplies they need for school because their parents simply haven't been able to do so.



If we look at the reports that the Windsor Star did, they reported about a woman named Janet who thought the court order for child support was her ticket off mother's allowance. So far it's been nothing but a useless stub. This is an article dated September 11, which is already a couple of months now: "Last week Harnick issued an apology to any parents experiencing problems and announced plans to immediately expand phone lines and bring in extra staff daily."

May I say to the Attorney General, I don't believe you. No one can trust you. So far you have been an abysmal failure, and we can't see it getting any better. We saw the video last week. You haven't even plugged in the computer lines yet. You haven't even opened up the Atlas Van boxes. How do you think you're going to solve the caseloads here?

**Mr Crozier:** They're plugging in the boxes.

**Mrs Pupatello:** They're plugging in the boxes. That may be what the Attorney General is trying to do. The reality is that real people are getting hurt by this. As individual members, we have to be responsible for that. If you've done this inadvertently, you do have time to fix it.

We don't want to hear just general rhetoric. Every time the Attorney General gets asked a question about a specific case, he says, "I'm not in a position to comment on this particular case." We need him to comment on this particular case, because that is the real face on just the numbers.

The Attorney General likes to generalize and talk about millions of dollars. He likes to talk about the hundreds of thousands of cases in the Ministry of the Attorney General and through the family support plan. We want to talk about Janet. We want to talk about Christine. We want to talk about Robert. We want to talk about the individual people who aren't buying boots for the kids this winter, who cannot plan for Christmas, who cannot buy the school supplies they should have bought in September, and I'm telling the members opposite, those children don't just live in Windsor-Sandwich. Those children come from Huron and Niagara, Kitchener and Waterloo, they come from all over Ontario, and every one of us is responsible for getting them the support they're owed.

We've all agreed that you are bringing in Bill 82 because you're determined to go get the money. Why can you not also ensure that your Attorney General does his job and ensures that the money actually travels to its destined place? That is your responsibility. I don't know what more we can do, as opposition members, but to continue to fax and continue to call and continue to beg. If these members are waiting for us to say uncle, I only have one thing to say: uncle. So kindly get your Attorney General working on this, because the families simply cannot afford it any longer.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions? I recognize the member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** The member for Windsor-Sandwich is always passionate when she speaks about children's issues and was very much so today, and this is an issue around children. It's a particularly appropriate day for us to be talking about this issue, because what the Attorney

General has done — and I agree very much with the comments of the member for Windsor-Sandwich — is to take the food out of the mouths of children who used to get it.

The Attorney General is quite right when he talks about problems with the plan and about the compliance rate with the plan. No one argues with that in this place. There have been problems, and some of the solutions that are proposed in his bill may make some difference. But what the member for Windsor-Sandwich is trying to get across, which seems to be very hard to get the members of this government to understand, is that there was compliance among a large percentage of people. In fact our figures show 29% in full compliance, not the 22% or whatever the minister said earlier today. Those are the ones who are suffering as a result of the bungling of this minister, as a result of his rush to try and pull the dollars out of this plan, get a 35% saving in this plan and to do that before he had put in place the kind of contractual arrangement he has planned to do between the Royal Bank and at least one other partner in order to offload this plan, to privatize it and to make it a plan that is more like a debt collection than a service to the children and the families of Ontario.

We know that, and so do the people who are not receiving the dollars they received before. They do not believe the rhetoric of this government, and it's good that the member for Windsor-Sandwich exposed them.

1750

**Mr Tilson:** There have been three members from the official opposition who have spoken with respect to this bill. I was disappointed that more time was not spent on the bill, either providing compliments or constructive criticisms with respect to the bill. The member for Windsor-Sandwich particularly spent a great deal of time on the problems that exist with the system, and I'm disappointed that she didn't spend more time on the actual bill and things the bill is doing.

The member for Downsview, on one of the letters she read, commented on one of the problems with respect to the opt-out and that the current plan is discouraged from doing that. Well, that's one of the things the new bill is going to do. The bill will be allowing individuals to opt out. The leader of the official opposition also commented on that, so obviously that section bothers them.

I would recommend that members of the official opposition look at subsection 9(2) of the bill, that they read that section, because that section indicates that the judge hearing the particular issue can order that being in the plan, they cannot opt out. I would suggest that they read that particular section.

The member for Downsview indicated that there's no question that the system that exists now requires much tightening up. I think it was the leader of the official opposition who indicated some of the items, and I assume therefore she's supporting those items: the suspension of drivers' licences; the expanding of income available to be seized; preventing the sheltering of assets by payors who set up companies with a second spouse so that assets can't be seized; the seizure of lottery winnings over \$1,000 or more. Those types of things I think the people of this province will encourage.



**Mr Crozier:** I rise to support the comments made by my colleagues from Downsview, Fort William and Windsor-Sandwich. In reply to the colleague from Dufferin-Peel, I agree that there are parts of this bill that I support, and that is in the area of enforcement. Anything we can do to collect from a deadbeat spouse should be done, short of putting them in jail and then they can't do anything to pay. But the bottom line here is that when support payments aren't paid, spouses and children suffer. Today, as the member for Windsor-Sandwich has said, as we debate this bill, there are women and children and a minority of male spouses who are suffering because of the system we have in place today.

I would hope that after debate and after, hopefully, the government has had the opportunity to accept some amendments, we will end up with a bill that will do what all of us want to do. In the situation of opting out, under certain present circumstances it may be appropriate for a spouse to opt out of the plan, but what I am concerned about is if then circumstances change and the paying spouse starts to renege, how quickly can we get back in and collect from that?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Crozier:** That's fine, if that's part of the bill.

In the end, we think part of this may be an attempt to cut costs. I do think the government has moved too fast. I think they should have waited for this bill to be in place before they closed the family support centres across this province and caused the problem we have today.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I appreciate having the opportunity to comment on the contributions by the leader of the official opposition and two of her caucus members.

There's a very good reason why people feel so passionate on this side of the House and why people are focusing on the problems that exist within the system, because the problems we are experiencing now every day, the calls into our constituency office, are really problems of a new making. They're not the long-standing problems that this bill purports to fix.

Let me say from the outset that there is much about this bill that I do support. There are many provisions that I think will be helpful, and I think you will see a very constructive approach on the part of our party towards those aspects of the bill.

But let me tell you, there are other aspects which I am dead set against. The ability for the discretion to be held by the Attorney General to close files at any point in time when they're determined to be difficult to collect is a nightmare waiting to happen. You want to encourage deadbeat dads? That's the way to go about it.

There are some significant problems with the bill. But how can we focus just on that bill when every day in this province there are over 1,200 women, 1,200 parents who are calling into the family support plan trying to get the money that they were in fact getting up until August?

The minister stood and told us at first that it was a computer glitch. We now know it was the most botched transition planning I have ever seen a government under-

take in this province, and this minister is culpable. It is not the workers who are left or the temporary workers who have been hired into the system. They are working day and night. I've spoken to some of them. I had a really terrible conversation with one of them this week, because she was very upset to be speaking to me as a politician and told me her time was valuable and I should get off the phone. I don't blame her for that. I understand the pressure they're under. The one I blame is the Attorney General — the Attorney General, who has moved with breakneck speed to lay off people, to take money out of the system and not have a transition plan in place that protects women and children, that protects family plan recipients. That is wrong. That should be stopped. It's your responsibility to stop it.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Windsor-Sandwich has two minutes to respond.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Of greatest interest to me are the comments we hear that likely don't get into Hansard, although of late we notice there are a number of comments that never get into Hansard that we certainly wish did. Most particularly, though, today during debate this afternoon, the members opposite have yelled out, "My office hasn't gotten any calls." I would challenge the Conservative members that if your office has not had a call about the family support plan, I would like you to be on record. I'd like your name and I'd like to know that you, as the MPP for whatever riding you represent, is on record as not having heard. I believe that if your office is not getting calls, your staff isn't telling you or you're simply not responding to them. I will tell you that a riding boundary line is not what's going to differentiate a family who is in need because money is not getting through to them.

For your comments about what we have to say about the bill — let me say that Bill 82 is rote. These are not new ideas. These are ideas that come from other jurisdictions and many of them are very good ideas. This is not what we have to debate today, because some things are so obvious that, frankly, in our debate we've got to get on to things you don't understand. What you don't understand is that while you think you're fixing something, the reality is you've thrown the baby out with the bathwater. You want things to be done so that you will have teeth to enforce things, but then you have no staff to do the enforcing — things that simply do not make sense. And all the while you have a frozen smile plastered on your face, saying, "Look what we're doing for the children of Ontario." It's as bad as the hoax you're playing on kids with the breakfast programs.

I am telling you that little by little the mask is slipping. The real thing that drives this government is simple, and that is the tax cut, and that is your drive to find money and to find it fast. But we will tell you again, it is too much and it is too fast.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being almost 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 am tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Burlington South / -Sud	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)</b> Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Carleton	<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC)</b> Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC)</b> Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	London North / -Nord	<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Comwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Don Mills	<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC)</b> Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Markham	<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC)</b> Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamaria (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC)</b> Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC)</b> Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Durham West / -Ouest	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	Nepean	Baird, John R. (PC)
Eglinton	<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William (PC)</b> Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme	Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nickel Belt	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Nipissing	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)</b> Speaker / Président	Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Oriole	Caplan, Elinor (L)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)
Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)	Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)	Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L)
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Ottawa West / -Ouest	Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)	Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Parkdale Parry Sound	Ruprecht, Tony (L) <b>Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.</b> (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances Johnson, Bert (PC)	Scarborough North / -Nord Scarborough West / -Ouest Simcoe Centre / -Centre Simcoe East / -Est Simcoe West / -Ouest	Curling, Alvin (L) Brown, Jim (PC) Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) McLean, Allan K. (PC) <b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Perth Peterborough Port Arthur Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)  Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury Sudbury East / -Est Timiskaming Victoria-Haliburton	Bartolucci, Rick (L) Martel, Shelley (ND) Ramsay, David (L) <b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Quinte Rainy River	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC) Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique Conway, Sean G. (L) Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Waterloo North / -Nord  Welland-Thorold Wellington Wentworth East / -Est Wentworth North / -Nord Willowdale	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail Kormos, Peter (ND) Amott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Toni (PC) <b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles</b> (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Renfrew North / -Nord Riverdale S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b> (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones Bassett, Isabel (PC) Bradley, James J. (L) Froese, Tom (PC)	Wilson Heights Windsor-Riverside Windsor-Sandwich Windsor-Walkerville York Centre / -Centre  York East / -Est York Mills York-Mackenzie Yorkview  York South / -Sud	<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports Parker, John L. (PC) Tumbull, David (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Sergio, Mario (L)  Kennedy, Gerard (L)
St Andrew-St Patrick St Catharines St Catharines-Brock St George-St David	<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement Boushy, Dave (PC) Martin, Tony (ND)		
Samia Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie Scarborough-Agincourt Scarborough Centre / -Centre Scarborough East / -Est Scarborough-Ellesmere	Phillips, Gerry (L) Newman, Dan (PC) Gilchrist, Steve (PC) <b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b> (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



# CONTENTS

Wednesday 20 November 1996

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Firefighters</b>	
Mr Sergio . . . . .	5203
<b>Services for abused women</b>	
Ms Churley . . . . .	5203
<b>Alcohol and drug abuse</b>	
Mrs Johs . . . . .	5203
<b>Grey Cup</b>	
Mr Agostino . . . . .	5203
<b>TVOntario</b>	
Mr Wildman . . . . .	5204
<b>Control of smoking</b>	
Mr Arnott . . . . .	5204
<b>Young offenders</b>	
Mr Ramsay . . . . .	5204
<b>Restorative Justice Week</b>	
Mrs Boyd . . . . .	5204
<b>Legislative pages</b>	
Mr O'Toole . . . . .	5205

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Retail store hours</b>	
Mr Runciman . . . . .	5205
Mr Ramsay . . . . .	5205
Mrs Boyd . . . . .	5206

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Paediatric care</b>	
Ms Castrilli . . . . .	5207, 5215
Mr Wilson . . . . .	5207, 5215
The Speaker . . . . .	5215
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Ms Castrilli . . . . .	5208
Mr Harnick . . . . .	5208, 5210
Mr Hampton . . . . .	5209
Ms Martel . . . . .	5210
<b>Young offenders</b>	
Mr Hampton . . . . .	5208
Mr Runciman . . . . .	5209
<b>Ipperwash Provincial Park</b>	
Mr Phillips . . . . .	5211
Mr Harris . . . . .	5211
<b>Social assistance</b>	
Mr Kormos . . . . .	5211
Mrs Ecker . . . . .	5212
<b>Academic testing</b>	
Mr Gilchrist . . . . .	5212
Mr Snobelen . . . . .	5212
<b>Ontario drug benefit program</b>	
Mr Conway . . . . .	5213
Mr Wilson . . . . .	5213

## Child care

Ms Lankin . . . . .	5213
Mrs Ecker . . . . .	5213

## Equal opportunity plan

Mr Maves . . . . .	5214
Ms Mushinski . . . . .	5214

## Fire safety

Mr Ramsay . . . . .	5214
Mr Runciman . . . . .	5214

## Attorney General's comments

Mr Hampton . . . . .	5215
Mr Harnick . . . . .	5215

## Workfare

Mrs Ross . . . . .	5216
Mrs Ecker . . . . .	5216

## PETITIONS

<b>Fire safety</b>	
Mr Bartolucci . . . . .	5216
<b>Child care</b>	
Mr Martin . . . . .	5216
<b>School boards</b>	
Mr Froese . . . . .	5216
<b>Rent regulation</b>	
Mr Curling . . . . .	5216
<b>Workers' Compensation</b>	
Mr Christopherson . . . . .	5217
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Mr Tilson . . . . .	5217
Mr Lalonde . . . . .	5218
<b>Hospital restructuring</b>	
Mr Bradley . . . . .	5217
<b>Education</b>	
Mr Wildman . . . . .	5217
<b>Snowmobile registration</b>	
Mr O'Toole . . . . .	5218
<b>Workers' Compensation Board</b>	
Mr Christopherson . . . . .	5218
<b>Parole system</b>	
Mrs Ross . . . . .	5218

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on government agencies</b>	
Mr Laughren . . . . .	5219
Report deemed adopted . . . . .	5219

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Boxing Day Shopping Act, 1996</b>	
Bill 95, <i>Mr Runciman</i>	
Mr Runciman . . . . .	5219
Agreed to . . . . .	5219

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996</b>	
Bill 82, <i>Mr Harnick</i>	
Mr Harnick . . . . .	5219, 5227
Mr Smith . . . . .	5224
Mrs Ross . . . . .	5225
Mr Bradley . . . . .	5226
Ms Martel . . . . .	5226
Mr Tilson . . . . .	5226, 1750
Mr Sergio . . . . .	5227
Ms Castrilli . . . . .	5228
Mrs McLeod . . . . .	5232
Mrs Papatello . . . . .	5236, 5241
Mrs Boyd . . . . .	5240
Mr Crozier . . . . .	5240
Ms Lankin . . . . .	5241
Debate adjourned . . . . .	5241

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Visitors</b>	
The Speaker . . . . .	5207
Mrs Caplan . . . . .	5207

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 20 novembre 1996

## PREMIÈRE LECTURE

<b>Loi de 1996 sur l'ouverture des magasins le lendemain de Noël,</b>	
projet de loi 95, <i>M. Runciman</i>	
Adoptée . . . . .	5219

## DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 1996 sur les obligations familiales et l'exécution des arriérés d'aliments,</b>	
Projet de loi 82, <i>M. Harnick</i>	
Débat adjournée . . . . .	5241

CADON  
XI  
• D23

Government  
Publications

No. 126



N° 126

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 21 November 1996

Jeudi 21 novembre 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 21 November 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 21 novembre 1996

*The House met at 1003.  
Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### ONTARIO COLLEGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 SUR L'ORDRE DES ÉDUCATRICES ET DES ÉDUCATEURS DE LA PETITE ENFANCE DE L'ONTARIO

Mrs McLeod moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 90, An Act to establish the Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators / Projet de loi 90, Loi créant l'Ordre des éducatrices et des éducateurs de la petite enfance de l'Ontario.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** I'm pleased to rise today in support of a bill which, for early childhood educators, has been a long time in coming forward. The purpose of the bill, as outlined in the explanatory note, quite clearly is to establish the Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators. It's a bill which would require persons who act as early childhood educators in day nurseries or premises where private home day care is provided to hold a certificate of registration issued by the registrar of the college. It would become an offence for a person to act as an early childhood educator without holding a certificate of registration.

I want to note that there is a correction to be made in the explanatory note, because the college would be required to report annually not to the Minister of Education and Training, as stated in the explanatory note, but to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I believe that's an editorial change and can simply be noted in the record and the appropriate change made in the explanatory note of the bill.

I want to note as well that the proposal here is to establish a self-regulating college. The bill proposes that the council would be composed of 12 persons elected by members of the college and nine persons who would be appointed by the cabinet.

The objects of the college would be:

"1. To regulate the profession of early childhood education and to govern its members.

"2. To develop, establish and maintain qualifications for membership in the college.

"3. To accredit professional education programs for early childhood educators offered by educational institutions.

"4. To accredit ongoing education programs for early childhood educators offered by educational institutions and other bodies.

"5. To issue certificates of registration to early childhood educators and to renew, amend, suspend, cancel, revoke and reinstate those certificates.

"6. To provide for the ongoing education of members of the college.

"7. To establish and enforce professional standards and ethical standards applicable to members of the college.

"8. To receive and investigate complaints against members of the college and to deal with issues of discipline, fitness to practise and professional misconduct.

"9. To promote the profession of early childhood education and to communicate with the public on behalf of the members of the college.

"10. To perform the addition functions that the regulations prescribe."

Those are the objects of the college. Again, I think it's important to note that every person who holds a certificate of registration would be a member of the college and that anyone who wishes to act as an early childhood educator would be required to hold a certificate of registration, just as any teacher in our elementary or secondary school system in the province of Ontario is now required to have a teaching certificate.

The larger question is, why is the bill here? It's here because early childhood educators have sought professional recognition through legislation for a very long time. They want, as educators, to be able to set and enforce standards for those who are providing education to our youngest children. They want early childhood education to be recognized as important to the healthy development of children and, because it is so important, to be a field that demands a quality of care.

This bill has been developed in very close cooperation with early childhood educators, a number of whom are in the gallery with us today. In fact the leadership for this initiative has always come from the Association for Early Childhood Education, and I want to acknowledge their effort and their commitment to their profession and to the children whose wellbeing is their concern.

There has been indeed a long history. It began in 1990, when the association created an ad hoc committee to look at the whole issue of self-regulation of the profession. It went on in 1991, when they were given funding by government for a study to look at the feasibility of legislative recognition for early childhood educators. It went on in 1993 with a study, an extensive survey, in which there was overwhelming support to the extent of over 90% of parents, over 93% of early childhood educators, members of the association, and 76% of early childhood educators who were not members of this association, all of whom believed there should be a registration process for early childhood educators and



there should be support for standards of practice and for greater accountability.

The work of the association went on in 1994 to do even further studies to ensure there would be support for the establishment of this kind of college. I think it's important to make the statement that effort has been made to get support of people who are out in the field, both the parents whose children are being placed in the care of early childhood educators and the early childhood educators themselves.

It is a fact, of course, that in establishing such a college, a self-regulating college would also be self-funding. So it both sets standards and requires a financial contribution on the part of members in order to keep it going. The commitment of people in early childhood education to setting standards, to being accountable, is so great that there is overwhelming support even for the financial contributions that would be necessary in order to establish the college.

This bill is also a follow-up to a private member's resolution presented in 1994 by Charles Beer, a former member of this Legislature and a former Minister of Community and Social Services. His resolution called for the professional regulation of early childhood educators through an act such as this which would establish minimum entry standards, standards of practice and a code of ethics. It was debated and passed in June 1994 with the unanimous support of members of all three parties.

1010

Mr Cam Jackson, who was the community and social services critic for the Conservative Party at the time, indicated: "We had unanimity, we had agreement.... The work of early childhood educators is of a very, very high quality and they need the authority to make it even better...as a regulatory body, they can discipline those members who act out." I trust the support that was expressed by Mr Jackson in his role as Conservative critic of community and social services will be reflected in the support again of all members of the House as this resolution takes the next step of being presented in legislative form.

Mr Beer's resolution recognized that there are no formal entry standards for early childhood education beyond the ECE diploma. Early childhood educators believe very strongly that there should be a consistency in the training of early childhood educators and that high standards should be set for graduation. They see continued professional development as essential for their continued competence. The college would set the standards for graduation and ongoing professional education in early childhood education.

Mr Beer's resolution also recognized that there are at this time no formal standards of practice, no mechanisms to ensure that early childhood educators are held responsible for their professional misconduct. There is, for example, a legal requirement, as we're all aware, that outright physical abuse of children be reported to a child welfare agency, but there is no requirement that inappropriate treatment of children be reported. In fact, there's no one to report such inappropriate treatment of children to.

There was a case of children in one nursery school who were being disciplined through physical isolation. They were being locked in a closet. That kind of inappropriate behaviour simply would not meet a code of conduct test. I trust that such a situation is a very rare occurrence, but I think the capacity to deal with them is absolutely essential for the wellbeing of children.

The college we're proposing would set standards for a code of conduct and would have the capacity to discipline those whose behaviour does not meet that code. The act will bring greater accountability as well as higher standards of quality into early childhood education.

I think it's important as well to point out that this act establishing a college for early childhood educators is complementary to the Day Nurseries Act. It doesn't replace the ministry's role in administering that act, it doesn't replace the ministry's responsibility for ensuring that standards are in place; its role under the Day Nurseries Act is limited to the licensing of facilities, inspecting them and revoking licences when standards aren't met. The Day Nurseries Act doesn't give the ministry power to act to enforce standards for individual professionals. That would be the responsibility the college would undertake as a self-regulating body.

I stress that this is not in any way an end run around government. That's why I hope it will have the support of all members of the House today. Any regulations passed under this act that relate to standards, codes of conduct, the definition of misconduct, the accreditation of educational programs could only be made with the approval of cabinet and with the prior review by the minister. As I've said, the college would be self-funding, so there would be no cost to government.

Some might wonder how we can afford to set high standards for early childhood education. Is it not already difficult to provide enough spaces for children who need them and pay child care workers a decent wage? The answer, clearly, to both questions is yes, it is difficult. But the response must not be, "Well then, let's forget about quality care." We cannot accept anything less than quality care for our youngest children.

The cost of quality care and the challenge of making care accessible and affordable, large as those issues are, are not the focus of this bill. This bill is concerned with standards and accountability. I believe if we're not prepared to set high standards of care for our young children we are jeopardizing their wellbeing and their futures. They need our protection and our commitment to the quality of care they receive, as do their parents. I believe this bill is a step forward in providing that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further debate?

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** I'm going to take a few minutes to comment on this legislation. Our critic for child care, Frances Lankin, will be taking the majority of the time.

I want to start by saying that I have no problem; I support the concept of a College of Early Childhood Educators. I just have a couple of points that I think the Leader of the Opposition will understand I would be making this morning based on a couple of positions the Liberal Party has taken in the last several months.



I believe the professions of educators should have a college. The teachers have one. But I'm getting pretty frustrated with the party to my right when one day they take one position and another day they take another position. If you believe in a college to be established for early childhood educators, which I believe in, why did you come in here and vote against the College of Teachers? Where is the consistency? How can there be any consistency?

I've taken a look at your legislation, Mrs McLeod, and I've taken a look at the makeup of the council. One of the things you tried to oppose in the College of Teachers was the makeup of the council. The makeup of the council in your proposed college does exactly the same thing as the makeup of the college in the College of Teachers.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Cooke:** Yes, it does, and you know it does. What I'm frustrated about is that when the Royal Commission on Learning came down, the Liberal Party opposed a program for three-year-olds, or expressed reservations about the program for three-year-olds. You endorsed the College of Teachers. Then as soon as there was opposition by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, you decided you were going to play politics with kids by opposing the College of Teachers and opposing protection of students.

I understand the position of early childhood educators, that they want to be recognized and should be recognized as a profession, but college legislation is not to recognize a group as a profession; it's consumer protection legislation. And that consumer protection legislation is essential for young people. It's essential for young people whether they're in day care centres or whether they're in our elementary and secondary school system. A College of Teachers is essential for early childhood educators, but it's also essential for elementary and secondary school teachers.

For you to have come in here and voted against the College of Teachers on second reading, on third reading, to have voiced support of it when it came in from the royal commission, to actually have had a question in the House at one point by your education critic after the implementation committee had reported saying to the Minister of Education and Training, "When are you going to bring in the legislation?" and then he brings it in exactly in line with the recommendations from the implementation commission, you opposed it for one reason. You opposed it because some of the teacher unions opposed it and you wanted to score political points. You bring this in today because you want to score political points.

If I was an early childhood educator, I would say to myself, "Does this mean there will actually be support from the Liberal Party if the government moves with the bill?" And my answer would be, "Only if the political wind is blowing in that direction will the Liberal Party support it."

I also want to say to early childhood educators that I guess I would believe there was more of a commitment from the Liberal Party to early childhood education if today we were debating a resolution from the Liberal caucus demanding that the Liberal Party in Ottawa fulfil

its commitments on early childhood education. If the federal Liberals did that and if that was the resolution here, I think it would be much more meaningful, it would be much more from the heart, and it would have a heck of a lot more meaning than this particular bill which I am upset about because of the inconsistency and the politics involved.

I'll be voting in favour of it because I've been consistent in my support for protection for young people through colleges, whether it's the College of Teachers or whether it's this proposal. I just wish the Liberal Party had been consistent.

1020

**Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York):** It is a pleasure to comment briefly on private member's Bill 90, An Act to establish the Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators. I want to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for bringing this matter to our attention today because it deals with one of our most precious resources: our children.

This bill establishes the Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators, requires persons who act as early childhood educators in day nurseries or premises where private home day care is provided to hold a certificate of registration issued by the registrar of the college, and makes it an offence for a person to act as an early childhood educator without holding a certificate of registration. It also requires the registrar to keep a registry of certificates of registration and requires the college to hold annual meetings of its members and report annually to the Minister of Education and Training, with the minister having supervisory control over the college, and gives the college broad powers to make regulations subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council and with prior review by the minister.

Our government believes that modern Ontario families need a variety of child care supports to allow them to fulfil modern obligations, including raising children, working and participating in public life. We also believe all children should have access to child care services regardless of family income or their parents' employment status. As well, parents should have the right to determine the nature and extent of their children's participation.

To that end, you are no doubt aware that the Minister of Community and Social Services is currently examining the recommendations of Improving Ontario's Child Care System, the report that could see more quality child care options for parents and thousands of newly subsidized spaces for children.

The proposed direction for Ontario's child care system includes reallocating funding to create thousands of subsidized child care spaces; maintaining tough provincial standards; improving enforcement and licensing procedures and allowing subsidies for a wider range of quality programs for school-aged children; redesigning and expanding the licensed home child care sector; and a simplified income test to better determine who qualifies for a fee subsidy and to focus resources on those families most in need.

Our government is spending up to \$600 million in 1996-97 on child care, the highest level in Ontario's



history, because children are a priority of this government.

I support private member's Bill 90 in principle because child care should be of high quality and properly regulated to reflect the best current knowledge about early childhood development as well as the varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds of Canadian families.

While I do support this private member's bill in principle, I would be remiss if I failed to mention some of the concerns I have about legislation that would have a major impact on early childhood education.

In her bill, I'm pleased to see that the Leader of the Opposition suggests that this Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators would actually report to the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Since there are two types of child care services in Ontario — private, also referred to as commercial or profit, and non-profit — I support this change to have the college report to and be accountable to the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

As well, the definition of "early childhood educator" in the bill is extremely broad and could be interpreted to mean that all staff positions in a day nursery must be filled by ECEs. This could prove to be extremely expensive, very unnecessary and, quite frankly, exceedingly unrealistic. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will take the constructive criticisms and proposed amendments under serious consideration.

The Day Nurseries Act clearly sets out minimum standards for the physical facility, schedule and operation of a child care program, but there are no safeguards in place with respect to standard practices and the ethical behaviour of the staff who operate these programs and provide care for children and families.

Having said that, I will be supporting private member's Bill 90 in principle because I want to protect the children and families of Ontario and increase the quality of care and education for young children.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I'm very proud to stand in support of this bill today, but before I make my comments I'd like to make a couple of comments to the member for Windsor-Riverside with regard to not me as Rick Bartolucci, Liberal MPP, but to me as Rick Bartolucci, a teacher for 30 years, just to let him know or to reaffirm in his own mind that he's absolutely correct. The teachers did not support the College of Teachers for any other reason than to say that they at no time had any trust that it was a self-regulating organization or body. He's correct when he says we didn't buy into it. It wasn't political. It was because he didn't trust teachers enough, he didn't trust that teachers could regulate themselves, and so he tried to make it a partisan body. That's why the teachers of Ontario rejected David Cooke and the NDP. That's why they'll continue to reject that concept: because teachers want to be trusted.

Let me continue just a little bit to say that when the member for Windsor-Riverside suggests that this bill is simply consumer protection, that's an insult. That's an insult to early childhood educators who are in the audience and who are at their day care settings or at their school settings. That's an absolute insult. This is so much more than consumer protection. Let me tell you what it is.

The term "early childhood education," for the former Minister of Education, refers to a group setting intended to effect and affect developmental growth in children from birth to those entering the first year. Some studies indicate that should be increased to year three but, regardless, we're talking about the early years of the child. It is during these years that those people who are committed to these early years form the foundation for future learning, form the foundation for growth in learning, form the foundation for love of learning. These are the building-block years during which a child learns to walk, to talk, to establish and develop a personality and many of the key tools he or she will use in the world that he or she will experience until death.

The members across the way don't understand children, because they wouldn't support their government agenda, but the early childhood educators in the audience do. They know that children have to feel secure. They know that children have to be affirmed. They know that children have to be provided with opportunities for success. They know that children have to experience stability. That's what this college is all about: ensuring that happens in the future.

The members across the way consider early childhood educators to be babysitters, and they should be perceived as so much more than babysitters. That's why they have to be organized. That's why they want to be regulated. These people are trained professionals. They are trained professionals who are being trusted with one of the most crucial stages of a child's development. As far as I'm concerned, in my 30 years of education, it's the most crucial stage of a child's development. The careful nurturing or the destructive influences to which a child is exposed at this stage can affect the child throughout his or her entire life.

Standards and accountability — what early childhood educators want from this bill — are long overdue in this area: standards to provide opportunities for children to develop an understanding of self and others which are characterized by warmth, caring, respect and the appreciation of individuality; standards which will provide excellence in the learning process, to experience a variety of developmentally appropriate activities which pursue their interests in the context of life in the community and the world around them; standards which promote the concept that families are the principal influences in their lives and that they, as secondary educators, want to enhance the importance and the love found within a family; standards which promote that the needs of individual children are to be met and which maintain excellent, positive interactions between all children, regardless of abilities or disabilities, regardless of strengths or weaknesses, regardless of race, colour or religion.

**1030**

That's what this bill is all about. It's not about partisan politics. It's not about establishing anything else except a very profound position that early childhood educators deserve the right to self-regulation. Certainly that didn't happen with the College of Teachers. It didn't happen when the NDP introduced it and it didn't happen when this government took over that false concept about not trusting teachers.



I see the member for Nepean waving like an idiot. I just want him to know that you can be in the centre and be very progressive as opposed to the right and being very retarded in the direction the province is going.

In many areas of our lives where we must trust others with something that is important to us, whether that be our health or our legal matters, we count on a certain level of professionalism. Where there are regulating bodies in place it is easier to instil such a trust. Early childhood educators recognize that by adopting a regulating body, they can increase their profile as professionals and improve the level of trust that parents must have in them, given the economic and fiscal situation of this province.

That's why it's crucial that we support this bill today. Currently, there are no regulating bodies for early childhood educators. There are no formal structures regulating the type and extensive training received and no assurances that standards and skills will be of the highest quality.

This is the legislation that will enshrine that. This is the legislation that will protect that. This is the legislation that will ensure that the creation of a professional regulating body will not only be good for early childhood educators, it'll be good for the charges that these early childhood educators are responsible for. They are not afraid of high standards that a college will impose; nor were teachers. They are not afraid, because they understand that their primary concern, their *raison d'être* is the positive development of children.

In conclusion, all I want to say is that I commend the early childhood educators of this province for wanting to establish a college for self-regulation. I know, having worked with them for 30 years, that they will entrust this responsibility in a very, very mature, caring and loving way, the way teachers would have had the government of the day, the New Democratic Party, and the present government, the Conservative Party, trusted teachers. I cannot see how anyone in this assembly can vote against this bill today.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I want to indicate that I will be supporting this bill on second reading. I think this bill is a step in the right direction. There are some areas of concern, but I think those would be appropriately dealt with through committee hearings and allowing people to come forward and have input into the shape of the bill. But the basic direction of the bill, to move towards self-regulation of the early childhood educators as a profession and to move towards the establishment of a college, are two principles I support.

I just have to take 30 seconds, maybe a bit more, to say how amusing I find it to hear the member for Sudbury, on behalf of the Liberal Party, try and defend yet again the amazing feats of flip-flop that party is capable of — quite, quite amazing.

For him to say the issue was whether the government of the day and/or the previous government that brought forward the proposal for a College of Teachers trusted teachers, that there was an issue of trust — what it boils down to is what kind of role the public has with respect to self-regulated professions.

*Interjections*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Sudbury, I'd ask you to withdraw those comments, please.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Which one of them would you like me to withdraw?

**The Acting Speaker:** I ask you to withdraw them.

**Mr Bartolucci:** I'm asking, which one would you like me to withdraw?

**The Acting Speaker:** To withdraw your comments.

**Mr Bartolucci:** I will withdraw that comment.

**Ms Lankin:** I was saying that the issue described as whether there is trust of a profession is the composition of the college and the participation of members of the public with respect to the self-regulation of professions. Having spent a significant amount of time as Minister of Health dealing with regulated health professions and shepherding that legislation through, and having some of the similar debates and arguments with professions at that point in time, and holding very tough to the principles I believed in terms of increase of public participation on those colleges, it's a fundamental participation-of-the-public principle that I believe in and would support, and would support for all colleges. So I find the member for Sudbury's characterization of this amusing but not unexpected.

However, let me turn to the bill at hand. The bill at hand is incredibly important in terms of the next step of development of the early childhood educators as a profession. But I have to say it comes at a time which is very unfortunate. It comes at time when the government of the day is about to take steps which will lead to the total dismantling of the not-for-profit, quality, licensed child care system, and I think that is a shame. I think it is a crime. We have spent so many years building this system, and I will say that it's not perfect, there's more that needs to be done, but in the exact opposite direction than the government of the day is proposing.

I listened to the member for Durham-York, who said that the government's reform proposals were about, for example, reallocating funds to increase the number of subsidized spaces. I have to tell you up front that I find the proposals for child care reform that have been released by the Minister of Community and Social Services in that document one of the most deceitful documents I have ever seen a government put forward. No rhetoric here. I'm absolutely direct with you in terms of how dishonest the proposals are in terms of what they purport to be and what the actual impact will be.

The reallocation that the member talks about is the removal of direct wage subsidies from early childhood educators' salaries. I wonder how, if we actually were able to succeed with this legislation, early childhood educators would be able to pay the professional fees for the college to operate. Many of these people in the profession are currently working at an average of about \$20,000 a year. These are for highly trained professional educators, being paid \$20,000 a year, and they're about to lose, on average, \$4,000 to \$5,000 a year out of their salary. That is an absolute crime.

The reason the direct subsidy was there in the first place was because the only alternative to that, the only other way to bring up the wages of this poorly paid professional group, is to raise parents' fees. And in



raising parents' fees you do only one thing: You ensure that the vast majority of working parents will not be able to afford to have access to quality, not-for-profit, licensed child care. You will continue to provide subsidies for low income, they will have access, and people who have the financial wherewithal to pay at the high-income end will have access, but the vast majority of working parents would not be able to afford to access that kind of quality, licensed, not-for-profit child care if these wage subsidies are removed and you attempted to continue to try and pay half-decent wages to these qualified, educated educators.

When I talk about it being deceitful, what the member says and what the minister says is that they're going to take that money, the money they pull out of the pockets of qualified educators, and they're going to put it into a pool and they're going to provide a greater number of fee subsidies for low-income parents. Let me tell you, those fee subsidies are currently cost-shared with municipalities on an 80-20 basis, 80% for the province, 20% from the municipality. There is not a municipality in the province, with all the cuts they've received in their transfers from the provincial government, that has any money to move ahead and pick up more subsidized spaces to create more subsidies. It won't happen. That money will sit there. The member says we're spending \$600 million this year on child care, more than has ever been paid before. Not true. They cancelled \$50 million of capital for child care, moved \$40 million into operating, and then the minister put a freeze on it and not one penny of that new money has been spent.

1040

The member says this is about maintaining tough standards. Excuse me? They're talking about doing away with the standards in the Day Nurseries Act for the physical plant of day centres and putting it under the building code. What does that mean? It means kids can be put into places where there are no windows, where they are there for eight hours a day and there's no natural light.

The minister says it's not important to have fencing around the play yards. What about where you have kids who run off or where you have strangers who want to enter in? It's not important to have fences for safety? What about in northern Ontario? I visited a child care centre in rural Thunder Bay and they have cougar watches and bear watches. They need the fences. This is ludicrous. The basic standards that are to protect the health and safety of our kids are being ripped out by these proposals, and she says this is about maintaining tough standards.

She also says it's about improving enforcement. Again, right now in terms of regulated home care, the home visits occur at a minimum once every three months, and in most agencies they have monthly or bimonthly visits. We have the member over there saying, "We're going to have tougher enforcement." What the minister is proposing is going once a year, and why? Because she said that home child care providers told her these home visits were intrusive. I've not met one regulated home care provider, early childhood educator providing regulated services from their home, who has said that it's intrusive. They find it a support, they find it an opportunity for professional development, and on and on and on. They support

it and they've said to me: "If you find someone who says it's intrusive, that's where you should be monitoring. That's where you should be worrying about the care that kids get."

The bottom line is, the government's proposals are about to dismantle the field at the very time we're talking about the importance of providing a college and providing the kind of structure to make sure the profession can enhance itself and enhance the quality of care.

I support the bill in principle. I hope we get it to hearings. But I would urge the minister to go out and do some meaningful consultation on her proposals because the bottom line is that we won't have a child care system left for early childhood educators to work in if she proceeds as she is wont to do.

**Mr Ron Johnson (Brantford):** It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak to this bill today. I want to say that as somebody with two young children — I've got two young boys myself, five and three — I think I can speak with some authority as a consumer with respect to early childhood education.

I want to say that in our family, with my wife as well as a professional and me working, we really need early childhood educators in our life and we acknowledge the important role that they play in our lives and the importance that they play.

I want to say, though, that I've visited a number of day care facilities in my riding, a couple of which come to mind, and I can tell you that the work that the early childhood educators there do is really the epitome of community spirit and professionalism in what they're able to do for young people in society today. I know the member for Sudbury has been throwing around accusations that somehow the government isn't supportive of this. I can tell you that as a member of the government side, I fully support this particular college and I think it's long overdue.

**Mr Bartolucci:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: He's imputing motive here. I said at the very end that I can't see how anybody could not support this, so I'd ask him to clarify his comments.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is a point of order. I didn't hear him impute any motive.

**Mr Ron Johnson:** The member for Sudbury is a little edgy today, I think. It's understandable too, because when you look at the sorts of contradictions he's faced with, it was only a few weeks ago, a number of weeks ago, that the member for Sudbury stood in his place and voted against the College of Teachers. You could see him squirming and you could see the member for Windsor-Sandwich squirming in her seat when the Leader of the Opposition was giving her 10-minute spiel about why this was such an important college, because the bottom line is that the Liberal —

**Mr Bartolucci:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I had absolutely no problem voting against the College of Teachers. I've been speaking out against it for three years.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr Ron Johnson:** I'd encourage the member for Sudbury to read his standing orders and realize what a point of order is and is not. I know he's struggling over



there with the fact that he's now finding himself in direct conflict with legislation that he wouldn't vote for in the past, and that's understandable.

But at the same time, the back benches over there cleared out because the Leader of the Opposition a number of weeks ago whipped them into shape and said, "Despite your personal feelings, despite the fact that you really want a College of Teachers, you've got to vote against this legislation because," as the member for Windsor-Riverside said, "we need political gains." That's all this is about to them. This is about political gains for the Liberal Party of Ontario. That's all this is.

They really don't care about children. If they really cared about children, they would have wanted to put in place the same accountability mechanisms at the senior school levels and at the regular education levels as they want to put in for early childhood educators. But they didn't want to do that. They didn't want to do it because, as the member for Windsor-Riverside correctly points out, to them it's about politics and it's about using children for political gain. That's really what this is about. They have absolutely no desire whatsoever to see what's best for either early childhood educators or the children who are under their care.

That's where we as a government differ. We are consistent in our message and we are consistent with what we are doing when we look at what we have done as a government for early childhood education, when we look at the fact that we in the previous budget have committed to spending \$600 million.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Ron Johnson:** We hear the NDP flapping over there, but I've got to tell you, that's \$40 million more than the NDP government has ever spent on early childhood education. They're getting all uneasy over there because they like to say over and over again that somehow this government is against children. But we are committed to early childhood educators and the work they do and we're also committed to the children they care for. That is reflected in last spring's budget and in our financial commitments and it's reflected in the fact that I think a number of government members are going to support this particular bill put forward by the Leader of the Opposition.

We look at that and we also look at the good work that the Honourable Janet Ecker had done previous to her new portfolio, when she did a study on early childhood education. We're talking about 12,000 new spots if we move into those reinvestments that are defined in that particular study.

But I want the Liberal leader to do something for me. I'm going to ask a favour. I don't expect her to do it; I'm not that naïve. She doesn't do us favours. But I've got to tell you, I want her to phone up her federal cousins and I want her to find out why her federal cousins have not fulfilled their commitment to the people of this province and this country with the investments they promised the voters in 1993 in terms of early childhood education.

The federal government has turned its nose up at children, has turned its nose up at early childhood educators. They have said unequivocally, "We don't care about children." That is what your federal cousins have

said, and I have to tell you, it's absolutely despicable from this side of the House. The people of Ontario deserve better from the federal government and so do the people of this country with respect to early childhood education.

Getting on to Bill 90, which I know this is about, and about establishing the early childhood education teachers' college, I want to say that it's important. I think it's very important that we proceed ahead with this and that we look at putting in place the accountability measures that we can obtain as a result of establishing such a college. I have to say that on the surface, of course, there's nothing wrong with establishing colleges. We've done that with a number of different professions. We can look at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the colleges of dentists and pharmacists, and of course now the Ontario College of Teachers. I think it's something very important in society.

I agree again with the member for Windsor-Riverside when he says that this in essence is consumer protection legislation. That's what colleges are. They're a regulating body, and at the same time it's consumer protection, because really this is about the kids. This is about providing adequate accountability within the child care sector and I certainly think it's something we need to move forward with.

#### **1050**

I do have to say, though, that I have a few concerns about this particular bill and I'd be remiss if I didn't bring them up. As much as I am supportive of the general direction that we're moving in with this, right now in Ontario about half of all the people working in child care are actually early childhood educators. So the concern I have is, what happens to the other half? All of a sudden, do we have to have everybody working in child care, even those who are assistants and aides? Do they now have to be early childhood educators? I think this bill needs some work and we have to be very careful that we don't create a whole level of bureaucracy and red tape that could be associated with implementing this.

As long as my concerns are ultimately addressed with respect to the red tape bureaucracy issue and the fact that we have to clearly define parameters with respect to membership and how the college will be made up and impact early childhood educators at the working level — in Brantford we've got some really good day care facilities and about half of the people in those facilities are actually early childhood educators and the other half are assistants and aides. I just want to make sure that this doesn't totally encompass all of them and force everybody in the child care sector to be an early childhood educator, because I think that would be counterproductive.

I want to just conclude by reaffirming my support for this particular bill and saying that, in spite of the Liberal Party and what has really become a laughable Liberal Party, a party that has been back and forth on almost every issue, absolutely laughable — and I know the member for Sudbury is all itchy over there and he's getting really concerned and standing up on points of order, and that really —

**Mr Bartolucci:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker —



**Mr Ron Johnson:** See, here we go again. You see, that really, Mr Speaker, is because —

**The Acting Speaker:** Your point of order?

**Mr Bartolucci:** I'm not itchy at all. The member obviously doesn't know what he's talking about. I respect that he has that ability to speak and not know what he's talking about.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. That is not a point of order.

**Mr Ron Johnson:** Case in point.

I just think, in conclusion, that this is a good bill despite the direction in the Legislature that it came from and I certainly reaffirm my support.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** I really am pleased to speak to my colleague's bill this morning. Lyn McLeod has worked for some time in the education field in Thunder Bay, and really that was her grounding that led her into politics and eventually here to Queen's Park many years ago. So I am pleased that she has been consistent. She always has been supportive of children and this is just an extension of that.

Unfortunately, this morning it has really turned into quite a partisan discussion where this bill is one of the few that in fact is as least partisan as possible. It really is something that the whole House hopefully will support, that right across the room we're going to have unanimity when it comes to the vote.

When I listen to the debate around the room — and in particular I'm always amazed by my colleague the member for Windsor-Riverside, who stands up to talk about the consistency within the Liberal Party. Now I am pleased to be here in the House, coming from the same community as the member for Windsor-Riverside, because I was in the community when he was the member and when he was the minister, and I was reading the newspapers of many, many groups, all of those who used to bang signs in for the member during an election but whom he wouldn't open the door for when he was the minister, many of the labour groups who wanted to come and speak to our member for Windsor-Riverside and to say: "We really need to talk to you. We have concerns." But Dave Cooke wasn't around. He no longer was listening to them.

That, my friends, was an indication of exactly what the New Democratic Party had done in their term in office and it was so infuriating to be a member of the community and watch that that even I chose to become involved. So it's hardly appropriate for these people now to turn to the Liberal Party. All I want to say, frankly, is pick your target because we've got a much bigger enemy right now and we'll take care of this stuff later. Really, if our member is just trying to get us going in the morning, it has probably worked, as the member for Sudbury has said.

Going back to the bill, the idea of early childhood education for many people who are not involved in the field — they simply aren't informed to know what a critical role early childhood educators play in the life of a child. In fact most growth for any individual happens in the first three years of life. When early childhood educators actually have intervention to a child at that early stage it makes an enormous difference in the

development of the child. Anything that we can do as legislators that means we're going to bring even more quality, even more of a distinction to that group that is teaching our children, is something that all of us in the House must support.

One of the things I knew when I travelled around Ontario and we held rallies trying to ask our government not to cut child care — I met with mostly early childhood educators and the thing that always impressed me was that they really were concerned about the children, especially for children at risk because they are the ones who need the intervention. In most cases children are identified as being at risk because of the work of early childhood educators. That is how we can get at those kids who need the extra something to level the playing field for them in the rest of their education and in the rest of their development, quite frankly.

I'm more than a little pleased to support the bill because I recognize that it does give that group that professional designation that they require, that I believe they should have, that I believe parents want to see. It also gives the group itself that level of accountability within its own ranks.

I have to make one final comment and that is to the members opposite who talk about their governmental support of child care. Let me say that last year, when our federal cousins were going across Canada to see how they could implement and how they could work with the provinces, it was this Harris government that (1) refused to meet and (2) would not match funds with our federal government moneys available, and that is why Ontario could not participate.

Other provinces in Canada were getting funding for child care, but Ontario did not. The reason why? Because then-Minister Tsubouchi and now-Minister Ecker refused to play with the feds. Instead of worrying about the children and worrying about the numbers, in particular in Metro Toronto, who are doing without very much required spaces, they decided to do the political thing; they decided to fight because they don't have their friends in Ottawa. They refused to work with them. We see that happening issue after issue after issue.

But if you knew that you had to go back to your ridings and say that your Harris government would not match funds with the federal government in order to provide more day care spaces when you come from Kitchener and you know the vast number of people who are looking for the spaces in Kitchener — I know because I've been there. When you go to Thunder Bay and you realize how many spaces would be required, it's very difficult to turn around now in the House and say that the feds weren't playing games, that the feds didn't want to play and match funds. Ontario in fact refused to come to the table. I think we need to make that absolutely clear: unfortunately this government does not have children as a priority. It is being seen time and time again that children are simply not a priority with government.

I can tell you that while we were campaigning, and unfortunately didn't win, children always have been a priority with the Liberal Party, whether that be at the federal level or at the provincial level.



**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** It's a pleasure to take part in this debate. I don't have much time left but I do want to say a few things. I will be supporting Ms McLeod's bill because I think it's the right thing to do. I personally don't think there are many more important people in the educational system than our early childhood educators. Just as I supported the College of Teachers for the elementary and secondary school level, I support it for early childhood educators as well.

It's really strange that a bill such as this, which a lot of people support, brought in by the official opposition, would run into such heavy water on a morning like this. It says something about what has transpired in this place over the last year or so.

As far as the member for Sudbury is concerned, who's usually quite a tranquil fellow and well-spoken, it's as though he woke up today and has a bad hair day. I think he's overreacting to the criticism from this party because all we were trying to point out were the inconsistencies of the Liberal Party when it comes to a College of Teachers, and that is hard for us to understand.

When the provincial government, the Tories, talk about their support, it really does make me almost nauseous, considering what you've done to the child care system in this province.

A pox on both your houses, but a lot of goodwill to the early education teachers of this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. The member for Fort William has two minutes.

**Mrs McLeod:** I just want to draw a bottom line in terms of priorities and consistency. Let me restate that the bill I present today follows a resolution that was presented by a member of my caucus two years ago and takes the next legislative step forward. This is the first opportunity I've had to bring to bring forward a private member's bill. I appreciate that neither the current government nor the immediate past government, in spite of their beliefs that this legislative recognition was important, was able to bring this forward. I understand the pressures of legislative agendas. I felt this was something I could do at my first opportunity, to present a private member's bill which would make a positive contribution to the quality of care our youngest children receive, and I'm appreciative, amidst all the debate, of the fact that this bill will receive support from all parties in the House.

I understand some of the debate that's gone on in terms of wanting to fight the old fight around the College of Teachers. I understand that the members of the New Democratic Party have a principle, as the member for Beaches-Woodbine has just expressed, that they wanted to see more lay representation on college boards. I differ from that, consistent in my belief that any college should be a self-regulating college of professionals, and that entails having a majority of professionals on that board. That is an essential part of the bill I present today, from my perspective.

I also happen to believe that professional recognition is an important part of this bill and that it is entirely consistent with consumer protection, as the member for Windsor-Riverside has raised. However, I do not believe that our youngest children are solely consumers. They do

not have choices. They do not just need protection. They need our commitment to provide the finest quality of care we can possibly provide.

That is what I believe this bill will do, to ensure that we are not only providing for the protection of children but for the provision of standards that will lead to a higher quality of care. With the commitment the House gives to this bill, I trust the government will take it the next steps.

1100

## ACCOUNTABILITY IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996

### LOI DE 1996 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DE LA RESPONSABILISATION

Mr Maves moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 89, An Act to amend the Audit Act to improve the accountability of hospitals, school boards, universities and colleges, municipalities and other organizations which receive payments from the government / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la vérification des comptes publics en vue d'améliorer la responsabilisation au sein des hôpitaux, des conseils scolaires, des universités et des collèges, des municipalités et d'autres organisations qui reçoivent des paiements du gouvernement.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** I rise today to speak to my private member's bill. The purpose of this bill is to permit the Provincial Auditor to conduct audits, to the extent he or she considers necessary, of organizations, corporations, associations, foundations, institutions and other bodies that receive payments, directly or indirectly, from the consolidated revenue fund, a government ministry or a government agency.

All members of this House realize what an invaluable service the Provincial Auditor provides to us and to all Ontario taxpayers. Since 1978 the Provincial Auditor has been doing value-for-money audits of our government ministries and identifying to us hundreds of millions of dollars of waste, abuse and inefficiency.

For instance, the auditor spoke out about a previous government's poor accounting practices which hid from public view the actual size of the province's deficit. The auditor revealed waste and abuse in the old Jobs Ontario program. More recently the auditor revealed that there was still fraud and inefficiency within the social assistance system, a navy in the Ministry of Environment and a disturbing level of overprescribing of drugs within the Ontario drug benefit program.

All governments in the past may have been somewhat embarrassed by these revelations but also appreciative, as each would soon after set out to rid the province of the revealed waste and abuse. Taxpayers have been very well served by the Office of the Provincial Auditor. This act simply seeks to expand the types of organizations the Provincial Auditor can audit to continue to assure taxpayers that their dollars will be spent efficiently and appropriately.

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario funds, through ministries, over 7,000 governing bodies for many different types of organizations. The functions of these organizations can vary from providing high-level policy advice to directly providing services to Ontarians. Historically



about half the government's annual expenditures are spent by these separately governed organizations. For the year ending March 31, 1996, about \$28 billion, or 48% of government funds, was spent by separately governed recipients.

The principal recipients of these grants were colleges, universities, hospitals, municipalities, school boards and many agencies funded by various ministries. The payments made to these bodies are typically conditional. These conditions may require adherence with certain legislation or that these payments be used cost-effectively and for specified government purposes only.

Currently the Provincial Auditor can only conduct inspection audits of these organizations. The definition of an inspection audit is extremely restrictive in that it permits the auditor to look at accounting records only. What this means is that the auditor can look at an organization and say that, yes, they were granted a certain amount of money and that their financial receipts confirm that they received and spent the money. The auditor cannot investigate any further to determine if the money was spent effectively, efficiently and economically.

By way of example, an organization could obtain \$1 million of funding to spend on computers. Upon inspection, the financial records would show that they spent \$1 million on computers, but if the computers didn't work, an inspection audit would not tell us that, whereas a value-for-money audit would.

The aforementioned revelations of abuse and inefficiencies brought to light over the years would not have been uncovered if the Provincial Auditor had only been able to conduct inspection audits of these ministries.

Conversely, the value-for-money audit is much more exhaustive. Generally, a value-for-money audit includes appraising whether money was spent with due regard to economy and efficiency, whether satisfactory procedures were established to measure and report on the achievement of intended results of programs and whether money was spent for the purposes for which it was intended.

We currently hold up our own ministries to this intensive level of scrutiny and accountability. There is no reason why all of the transfer recipients receiving taxpayers' dollars should not be held to the same level of scrutiny and accountability.

The Provincial Auditor's 1996 annual report says: "A better accountability framework is necessary for the effective management of government finances, spending and resources. Such a framework, especially if anchored in legislation, would provide a better means for the Legislature to assess whether all funds have been and are being spent...for the intended legislative purpose."

I do not think there is a member in this House who would not like to see tax dollars spent more responsibly and agencies made more accountable with respect to the conditions attached to any funding.

Since 1990, members from all three parties on the public accounts committee have been in favour of expanding the Provincial Auditor's authority to do value-for-money audits of grant recipients.

In 1992 the member for Nickel Belt, at the time the province's finance minister, wrote to the Chair of the

public accounts committee and said, "As I have said in the past, I support any proposed amendments which will allow the Provincial Auditor's office to continue their important role in ensuring that value for money continues to be received for all government expenditures."

More recently, in November 1995, the Liberal member for Lawrence urged the government to "make the amendments necessary to the Audit Act so the auditor could go in and audit some of these transfer payment recipients."

As you can see, this bill's intent has had all-party support since 1990 and continues to have all-party support.

It is imperative for decision-makers in this province and elsewhere in the country to be provided with reliable information so they can assess each government program or payment and whether it should continue as is, be modified or be discontinued.

The Audit Act in its current form came into effect in April 1978 and gave the auditor the ability to do inspection audits of grant recipients. Initially the auditor conducted inspection audits only on an exception basis, where evidence from ongoing ministry review and agency audits indicated that such audits were advisable.

Between 1984 and 1991 the office expanded audit activity to include the major recipients of government grants. Several audits were conducted in each of the community college, university, hospital and school board sectors. The university and hospital communities were sufficiently concerned about just inspection audits that they proceeded to get legal opinions about the authority and scope of these audits. These legal opinions are proof that the act as defined in its current form does not provide the scope necessary to carry out anything more than a very limited financial audit which does not allow for a sufficient amount of accountability.

Yesterday I received a letter from the chief operating officer of the Ontario Hospital Association which objected to allowing the Provincial Auditor to undertake value-for-money audits in hospitals. The claim is that the Ministry of Health has appropriate accountability structures in place for hospitals. To that argument, I say that we, the members of this assembly, have asked the Provincial Auditor to be our watchdog of these very same ministries which are supposed to be watchdogs of these transfer organizations. If we believe that the taxpayers deserve an independent auditor to look into the spending practices of the ministries, then how could we not, by extension, believe that an auditor is also needed to periodically look into the spending practices of the agencies that these ministries give money to?

The Provincial Auditor has told me and said publicly many times that he is a servant of the members of this House. A major part of our job when we are elected by the taxpayers is to make sure that their dollars are spent properly, to make sure that they are indeed getting value for their money. The Provincial Auditor tells us directly, without any middleman, with no bureaucratic baffle-gab to get lost in, whether or not we are receiving value for the money we vote to spend. To leave this function entirely to the career civil service in these cases would be an abdication of our responsibility.



As mentioned above, the universities and hospital communities have in the past hired law firms to make sure the Provincial Auditor could not come into their institutions to conduct value-for-money audits. Well, this action is very disturbing. Public institutions have used public funds to hire lawyers in order to keep the public from being able to determine whether their money was being spent properly. When hospitals and universities are so nervous about the Provincial Auditor doing value-for-money audits of their institutions, it reinforces the belief that there indeed is a need for the auditor to conduct such audits.

1110

This is really a fairly straightforward matter. Institutions and organizations in this province which receive substantial sums of taxpayers' dollars should be subject to full audits by the watchdog for the people, the Provincial Auditor. I hope that all of my colleagues on both sides of this House will see the public good in this bill and support its passage.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Further debate?

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I'm pleased to add my voice to the bill here today. I'm going to support it, not that the bill does a great deal for the people of Ontario but because it's practically redundant. The actions of the government that we have seen in the past year or year and a half already give the government, the various ministers, every power that they want to look, open, audit any book in Ontario where the government is giving agencies, hospitals or school boards funds. Perhaps this is another way for the government to grandstand, to try to grasp a little bit of the public's attention.

I think what the government is trying to do with the introduction of bills such as this one here is that for the next couple of years or so they will be trying very desperately to undo what they have been doing over the past year or year and a half. I think what we will see in the next couple of years is a government that will be scrambling to undo the damage they have done with their irresponsible bills, laws if you will, that they have so utterly imposed upon the people of Ontario.

We have a government that keeps on saying, "We want less government, we want to eliminate bureaucracies, we want to eliminate red tape," and here we go and create another layer of bureaucracy.

**Interjection:** It's already there.

**Mr Sergio:** It's already there. Well, you see, it's already there. If it's already there, what do we need on top of that? Do we need more on top of that? Certainly not. I'll tell you, there are no better agencies than local municipal governments, which are run more efficiently than any other agency where the government has their fingers in it.

The Minister of Health has the power to eliminate totally the hospital boards, for example. They can put in their own man or men and do whatever the heck they want. They don't have to do this. This is not needed. Why do they do it?

The government tends to run their business in the normal way they have started since the last election: suggest some actions without saying why, what for. Do

we have a problem with some school boards? Do we have a problem with some municipalities? Do we have a problem with some agencies where the government has been giving them money? Why don't they give us the needed information, the tools, and say: "You know what? We have a problem with funding hospitals, funding local municipalities. We have a problem here." Show us the problem. Let the public know what they're intending to do.

Their real intent is not that, because if they showed us, they would show the people of Ontario that by introducing this new law, they would be bringing less government, more efficiencies in those particular agencies, such as school boards, hospital boards and so forth, and would make it more effective. This is the same with all the other bills the government has introduced where they said, "This is what we want to do." But, heck, they don't tell us why they want to do that. So please tell us before we go to the people of Ontario and say, "We want to have another audit, because the auditing for accounting records doesn't do."

If they have a problem giving funds to particular agencies, they shouldn't be giving funds in the first place. But when we are talking school boards, hospital administrations, municipalities, I have a problem. As I said, it doesn't do anything because the powers being requested are already there. I see it as a redundancy.

When we are saying we want to have a further audit, a value-for-money audit, what does it really mean? Is it that now we are creating another body to oversee the minute receipts of a particular government agency or hospital board? What does the government create when we are trying to impose the government's will, if you will, on another agency? Are we going to send those agencies underground to hide things? Is this what the government's thinking of doing? Certainly not.

I only have a few minutes. As I said, I have already committed myself to supporting the bill because it doesn't do a heck of a lot to change things. But I cannot understand it. The government is cutting here, is cutting there, and then you say: "We want to do more. We want to have audited some of those agencies we are trying to assist." So what does the government want to do? Do they want more cuts, less service, more responsibilities, more accountability? Do they want more efficiencies? The government should tell us, tell the people of Ontario, how they can accomplish that.

One thing I would like to say especially is on behalf of the local municipalities. There is no other level of government more open, more accountable, than the local level of government. Every particular department is scrutinized not only by the local council but the provincial government and auditors as well. What is the real reason, then, for the government to bring forth another bill like this? It is certainly to take the responsibility away from those agencies. It is to divert the real responsibility of the government and not to pull the wool over the eyes of those agencies that are doing a good job.

As I have said, I have a few minutes. I'm going to support the bill, but the power the government wants, it already has.



**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Before I tell the members opposite which way I plan to vote on this bill, I just want to go through some of what I think the bill will do and then sum up at the end by trying to let you know where I'll be voting on this.

What comes to my mind when I read this bill is that what he wants to do on the surface looks to be okay. He's saying, "Let's extend the provincial powers of the auditors" — the auditors of the Provincial Auditor — "to go out and audit municipalities, audit school boards, audit provincial agencies which receive money, and to make sure that the dollars taxpayers are giving to these other agencies are properly spent."

1120

When I hear that kind of discussion going on and I see this legislation come forward, is the member suggesting that municipalities, school boards and hospitals are not accountable already? Is the member across the way saying that the municipalities across this province are wasting taxpayer dollars to such a degree that there is large concern and the provincial government has to reach into the municipalities and put its heavy hand on the backs of the councillors and the mayors of the cities and towns across this province to make sure they're doing their job right?

As a member representing a constituency with three municipalities, namely, Timmins, Iroquois Falls and Matheson, those particular organizations, I would say, are very responsible about how they spend taxpayers' dollars. If I look at what Mayor Power has done in the city of Timmins, what Mayor Graham has done, what they've done out in the town of Matheson, I have never seen examples to cause me to be concerned that they're wasting taxpayers' dollars. They are the local level of government. They are the closest government to the people they represent. If they do something inappropriate or that the public doesn't like, they're the first ones to find out. The municipal politicians, I find, tend to take their jobs fairly responsibly and people take their concerns to them fairly quickly.

Is it that the government wants to put its hands on the back of every mayor and every councillor across the province to make sure they're doing its bidding, doing things the way the provincial government wants things done? Is that really what we're trying to do here? If that's the case, I would not vote for this bill.

If the government is saying, "We think we can do things more efficiently by finding a different way of doing audits to municipalities, to school boards and hospitals across this province in a way that saves taxpayers some dollars," maybe then I'd support it. But it seems to me that the government, through this bill, through a private member's bill, is not putting its money where its mouth is, quite frankly, and it's quite contrary to everything else they're doing as government legislation.

If you watch what the government has been doing around the who-does-what-to-whom exercise, the whole purpose of that is to say: "Let's remove duplication from the various levels of government. Where you've got municipal governments and you've got regional governments and the province doing things jointly, let's clearly

give the responsibility to one." That's something our government, under the New Democratic leadership of Bob Rae, had already started; actually, some of that started under the Liberal government as well.

Is what the government is doing with this bill to say, "We will remove the requirement from municipalities and others to audit themselves, and we will send the auditor in to do that instead"? I think the member needs to be clear about what direction the government wants to take on this particular bill.

First of all, I want to say this outright so there's no question in anybody's mind where I'm coming from on this. I support in general that there's public accountability. I haven't got a problem with that. Where I've got a problem is that the tone of this bill, along with the actions of the government this far, if I were a municipal alderman or on a hospital board, would say that I'm not doing my job right and I'm unaccountable and that the province has to come in and has to look over my shoulder to make sure I'm doing things right.

I say to the member across the way, who just got elected in 1995, I want you to recognize that there are already mechanisms within the province that your government has and which those agencies must adhere to that do make sure there is a good accountability about how taxpayers' dollars are spent. If you take a look at school boards, for example, and municipalities, they have to put their books out to the public every year through an auditing process. They don't spend taxpayers' dollars out in the dark. They strike their budgets, as the province does. Then, once they've decided how their budget is going to be spent, they go out through their administration and spend the money they're entrusted to spend and carry on the services of the school board, and at the end there is an accountability process that happens.

That the Provincial Auditor should have a duplicate role of going in after they've already been audited to do it all over again to make sure that proper policy has been followed, because I think that's what you're talking about here, I say is wrong. It is not the job of the auditor to determine what public policy should be and how it's being followed. His job, I think, should be restricted to what he's doing within the provincial realm and leave those parts to the municipalities.

The other thing is that the member would remember there was a bill that came before this House, oh, I think it was about November, about this time last year. It was called, as Speaker McLean referred to it, the ominous bill, or the omnibus bill, Bill 26. In that particular bill your government extended your powers as ministers and as cabinet to do much of what you're talking about doing in this bill.

For example in hospitals, because of Bill 26 a Minister of Health is able to take a whole board of a hospital and put them under administration and say, "We don't give a tinker's dam what the people in the city of Timmins have to say about how their hospital is run." If the minister disagrees with the decisions being made by the board of the Timmins and District Hospital, or Bingham hospital, or Anson General, he can appoint his or her trustee, who would then go in and take over the entire running of the hospital. It seems to me you've got far-



sweeping, draconian powers as it is, to be able to tell the people of this province how you want their dollars spent, without having to come in with this particular bill.

I'm trying to say here, in closing off that part, that I find this somewhat intrusive. I agree with and support without any difficulty the ability to make sure that taxpayers' dollars are being spent wisely and are being spent according to the public policies we set forth in our Legislature, as are set forth at municipal and school board levels. I want to make sure that at the end there's an accountability and I have no problem with that. I will support the bill under that premise, but I want to tell the member right up front that I have some grave concerns about what he is really talking about under this bill.

It is a tradition in this Legislature — this has not happened since the Tories have taken power, but normally we afford to private members the opportunity to have their bills passed at second reading, give them an opportunity to see the light of day at a committee, then make a decision. In the spirit of what this House is all about I will vote in favour of this bill, but I want to say there are some real questions.

On the question the member raises in regard to value-for-money audits, I just want to let you know I sat on public accounts before you were here, and there was not unanimity within the committee in regard to allowing the Provincial Auditor to have value-for-money audits. It was put forward by Mr Peters, our public auditor, and it echoed through members of your caucus and the Liberal caucus, that we do value-for-money audits on things. I say now what I said back then: Yes, you want public accountability, but there are times when the provincial government is going to spend money on a program or service to a community that is far in excess of what is being spent in another community. Sometimes there are good reasons for that. As I said in public accounts, and if you go back and look at Hansard you'll find the comment, if you go into Attawapiskat or Chapleau or Calstock, it may cost a lot more money to provide a certain service for the citizens within that community. It might be quite a bit more expensive.

If we run a hospital in some of those communities the costs are quite a lot higher because of all kinds of reasons, from geography to isolation to not being able to take advantage of certain services that would normally be available in a community that the hospital has to do itself. Therefore we sometimes spend more money, but there is a good reason for that. As a matter of public policy we as legislators and as people in this province say it is important that people, no matter where they live in this province, have a certain level of service that is available to them as its citizens.

If you move to value-for-money audits according to the way Mr Peters had echoed it at the public accounts committee when I was there, a case could be made that you would not offer certain services in particular communities because political hay could be made with how much the price for those items is. For example, a school expenditure in the community of Attawapiskat up on the James Bay coast is much more expensive per pupil than it would be, let's say, in the city of Timmins, but there's a good reason that. It's much more expensive for all

kinds of reasons. Often teachers don't even come from the home community, and you're going to spend more dollars per student.

When some political opportunists of the right wing would stand up and say, "Look at how much money we're spending on Attawapiskat, look at how much money we're spending in Timmins, and is this ever terrible," the public might accept the argument just on the surface, not recognizing there are reasons why we're spending more money in Attawapiskat. There are community and social conditions that we must take into account. In a community like Attawapiskat you would have to bring into the school a whole component around native education that you would not have to do in the city of Timmins.

I think that value-for-money audits, although they sound like a good idea, have some dangerous repercussions if the results are taken by political opportunists of the right wing to expose how badly the government is spending money in a particular area where that may not be the case.

1130

Je ne fais pas ceci pour commencer de faire l'agent provocateur. Le gouvernement, jusqu'à date, me démontre qu'ils ont vraiment un appétit, quand il s'agit de pouvoir, pour mettre la main autour et contrôler les services dans la province, même les services pour lesquels ils ne sont pas responsables.

Quand les agences municipales — les hôpitaux, les écoles et d'autres services — font des affaires avec lesquelles le gouvernement n'est pas d'accord, on voit beaucoup d'exemples où le gouvernement commence d'envoyer des messages très directs à ces agences en disant, «Écoutez, si vous faites quelque chose contre notre politique, qui nuit au gouvernement conservateur, on va tout d'un coup possiblement enlever votre financement,» comme l'avait dit M<sup>me</sup> Cunningham à un certain groupe à London.

Je le sais de la part d'un maire dans le nord de l'Ontario qui ne veut pas le dire ouvertement en ce moment, mais il s'est fait dire directement que s'il continuait de faire des bruits contre le gouvernement provincial, il est possible que des demandes de financement avancées par la municipalité pourraient se faire nuire grâce à ses actions. Il y a des soins de santé dans ma communauté où les personnes responsables se sont fait dire très directement par le ministère, et par le bureau du ministre jusqu'à un certain point, que si leur point de vue est négatif, contre la politique du gouvernement, c'est très possible que ça allait nuire à leur financement.

Si cette législation mise de l'avant en était la seule et je ne voyais pas tous les indices que le gouvernement a mis en place jusqu'à date, toutes les actions, peut-être que je n'aurais pas de problème. Mais en vue de toutes les autres affaires, j'ai peur, je crains qu'à la fin de la journée le gouvernement pourra en profiter, que la raison pour le projet de loi ne sera pas suivie et que ce sera plutôt pour l'agenda politique.

In principle I will support the bill. I will give the member the opportunity to have his say in committee, if it comes to committee, to answer some of those questions.



I'd like to thank you very much for my time in the debate.

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** It's my pleasure to respond today to my colleague the member for Niagara Falls's private member's bill, the Accountability Improvement Act, which proposes amendments to the Audit Act.

The member for Niagara Falls I feel has brought an important bill designed to improve accountability of previous moneys entrusted to government agencies and transfer partners. The objective of the proposed act is to ensure that these moneys have been used for intended purposes and that activities were carried out in an economic and efficient manner.

Ensuring that public moneys are spent wisely is something that I believe all members of this House support. I would like to thank the member for Niagara Falls for his personal efforts in trying to improve public accountability in this important area and offer my support today for this objective.

The Accountability Improvement Act would allow the Provincial Auditor's office to conduct value-for-money audits of organizations that receive money from the consolidated revenue fund. Few of the public outside of government certainly understand just how much money we are talking about.

The government's expenses for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1996, totalled \$57.1 billion. Of that amount, \$40.1 billion was made in the form of transfer payments. These payments supported all types of services to the public, primarily through grants to municipalities, school boards, hospitals, colleges and universities. It is crucial that taxpayers be assured that their money is being spent wisely. That is why I believe the objective underlying the Accountability Improvement Act is a good one.

This government strongly supports increased accountability. In fact we have already implemented many initiatives, in the past year and a half since we've been elected, to improve and clarify the precision of information that is available to members of this House and to the public.

We have published business plans which the Provincial Auditor recognized as the first step towards improved accountability; we have produced an annual report to present to Ontario's taxpayers, a simplified overview of this province's finances; and we have ended the practice of keeping two sets of books and have reported the province's true fiscal picture. The public can now review the government's plan —

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Cochrane South, come to order, please.

**Ms Bassett:** — and the reports on actual performance knowing the information in these reports is compiled in a consistent manner.

These initiatives were the result of recommendations made by the Ontario Financial Review Commission, which the government established in the summer of 1995 to review the government's financial practices. We are committed to implementing the commission's recommendations, as the finance minister stated in his 1996 Ontario

budget, and we will continue to improve accountability for public resources entrusted to this province.

Another important government initiative already under way is the Who Does What panel, headed by David Crombie. The recommendations of this panel may change the relationship between the government and its transfer payment partners. That may in turn change the scope of how this bill would apply, but it won't change the good idea that it represents and it won't weaken our commitment to public accountability.

This government, as the Provincial Auditor notes in his 1996 annual report, has made significant progress in improving accountability by enhancing the quality of financial information available to the Legislature and through the publication of Ontario's business plans earlier this year. This government intends to continue to improve the accountability to the House and to Ontario taxpayers.

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** I rise in the House today to support this bill: a bill of accountability, a bill to better ensure value for money. The little guy, the taxpayer in my riding, can't afford to toss money away. My taxpayers, my seniors, my working poor, need every dollar. Money they entrust to us to spend wisely — taxes — must be accounted for. It isn't fair that some groups that receive government money never have to account for it.

The taxpayer, through various government agencies, provides grants and subsidies to many groups. A vast number of these groups have high administration costs. That usually means those in charge are paying themselves pretty impressive salaries. Instead of passing money on to the needy, these groups simply gobble up the money and pay themselves, justifying their actions in the fact that they are talking of helping the poor.

We must ensure that as much of the money as possible goes to charity and not to those who run the charities and foundations. That is why I rise in the House today to support this bill which permits the Provincial Auditor to audit any body, group or association that receives public money from the province or one of its agencies, commissions, boards or foundations.

The private sector must account for funds to its shareholders, to the taxpayer and to its lenders. Public companies have rigid full disclosure requirements. Shouldn't groups that are awarded grants, gifts and subsidies have to account to the donors, the taxpayers?

It has been my experience that the poor get shafted by what I call the poverty industry. This is the large group of people who earn a living as middlemen between those who donate to charities and foundations and those they seek to help. Those who work in the poverty industry talk a lot about the poor, and they pay themselves a lot for doing it.

During the hearings of the standing committee on finance, I witnessed the same legal aid lawyer represent at least two groups. His résumé listed over 50 poverty groups. He was a wealthy man due to the poverty industry. Under the guise of helping the poor, he has flourished.

1140

Hard-earned taxpayers' money is frittered away by uncaring bureaucrats, bureaucrats who dispense money so



they have a job, bureaucrats who aren't concerned with the use of the money, just the administrative work of reading the proposal and writing the cheques. The bureaucrats are not really concerned about accountability, but the taxpayers are and I am.

It is incomprehensible for the little guy to fund the poverty industry while not knowing the true results of those expenditures. The little guys in my riding are nice people who, for the grace of God, go they in hardship and poverty, the little guys who have been ripped off and now are getting taken advantage of again. Imagine subsidizing millionaires who take advantage of our compassion for the poor. Imagine subsidizing crazy political movements, some of them violent, at the expense of the poor.

Accountability is what this bill requires: value for money. Salary disclosure should not scare any truly compassionate person who wants to help the poor. This bill will ensure good internal control over taxpayer money. Taxpayer money ought to be spent wiser and better. We've all heard of some charities that have administrative costs exceeding 80% of revenues. I know of one funding recipient which receives \$3.6 million from the government and grants \$2.8 million. It costs them \$800,000 to cut a few cheques. The public, which is paying, has a right to know where its money is going. Full and honest disclosure will ensure this.

Many receiving government money are social activist groups or groups promoting political beliefs. They hide their motives while appealing to our compassion and charity. Instead of giving money to the poor, they promote a political agenda and use the money to pay themselves. This was a growth industry under the previous NDP government. The czars of the give, grant and spend industry sold out the poor after using the poor to extort cash from the public purse.

We're not talking trust, but common sense. This Legislature must be accountable for every dollar it spends, and that includes the money we give to groups, foundations and causes. Let's make sure the money is going to those who really need it. Let's ensure the needy get real help. Let's make certain the needy get real value for the money taxpayers spend.

**Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex):** It's certainly a pleasure as well to rise today to speak in support of Bill 89, standing in the name of my colleague the member for Niagara Falls. I have to say on a personal note that over the past 18 months I've come to know this member quite well, both personally and professionally, and I think this bill is very indicative of this individual's strong views to achieve greater accountability in our public expenditures process. Therefore his sponsorship of this bill comes as no surprise to me, and I congratulate him on that basis.

Bill 89, introduced by my colleague, would amend the definition of "audit" in the act so that the Provincial Auditor may conduct an audit to the extent he or she considers necessary. It would also seek to expand the ability to conduct audits, to the extent necessary, of secondary recipients such as organizations, corporations, associations, foundations and institutions and any other bodies that may receive payments, directly or indirectly, from the consolidated revenue fund.

In my mind, this is an important first step to modernize what I consider to be significant constraints with respect to accountability in auditing in this province. This bill would assist in amending the Audit Act so that the Provincial Auditor is able to determine whether the recipients of these grants and payments have met the conditions of funding.

Again from a personal perspective, I truly believe the constituents of Middlesex and London want to be assured, within reason — I must emphasize "within reason" — that our public expenditures are relevant and transparent, but above all accountable, in order that they and all other Ontarians can be assured that their tax dollars are being spent responsibly.

This bill, in my mind, should not be construed, as the member for Yorkview has suggested, as being redundant or as government grandstanding. In a similar vein, and while I respect the comments of the member for Cochrane South, I don't share his concern about the heavy-handedness of this bill. It's truly about getting and introducing accountability into the auditing system of this province.

In the few minutes that I have there is really little opportunity to effectively discuss the rationale between value-for-money versus inspection audits and I think the member sponsoring the bill has adequately done that in his opening remarks.

What I can say is I met with various groups and organizations in my own riding last week. There was a common theme that I've heard from them as they've made various presentations in the context of organizational relationships and reporting mechanisms that affect their organizations. Those words are "relevancy" and "transparency." I believe this is an appropriate expectation on behalf of the public, given the some 48% of government funds that are spent by recipients of government transfer payments. For the year ended March 31, 1996, this translated into approximately \$28 billion. I believe this is an appropriate means to address public expectation on this issue.

As we look to page 18 of the annual report of the Office of the Provincial Auditor, it's very evident that there's been considerable discussion around this issue for some time, discussion coming from our own caucus, the Conservative caucus, in A Blueprint for Learning in Ontario in 1992, and readdressed in comments by the Honourable Floyd Laughren when he was serving as Treasurer of the province and Deputy Premier.

I share the viewpoint expressed by the auditor, and that viewpoint is one whereby permitting his office to carry out value-for-money audits of grant recipients who are given government funds to achieve legislative purpose would make his office's services to the Legislative Assembly, to the public accounts committee, and through them to the taxpayers, more comprehensive and more effective.

I certainly concur with the intention of this bill and support it in its entirety. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to it for the few minutes I've had.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I just want to speak for a couple of minutes — that's all I've got left — and say that I was impressed by the comments of



the member for Cochrane South, although I think I'll be voting differently than he's going to be voting when it comes to the vote on the bill.

I think there are already appropriate audits done in all our public agencies and I'm not sure what you're attempting to prove with this. It might give the Provincial Auditor another photo opportunity out on the 407, which is a very unusual thing for a Provincial Auditor to do, I must add. I was quite surprised that he would be put in that position of taking advantage of such a photo op. But this will perhaps give him more opportunities.

I will be voting against this bill, partly because of the very arguments that the member for Cochrane South used. I ran into a difficulty in my own constituency where I very much wanted a road built to a small community and I had a horrible time convincing not only the bureaucracy but my colleagues of the need for that road because the traffic counts did not justify the expenditures on that road, to have it rebuilt.

It was an isolated community and you could not justify it by the numbers. You could only justify it by the need for that road for the people in that community, a community of about 3,000 people. So I had a terrible time. Finally we ended up doing it but in a fairly, quite frankly, heavy-handed way to get it through. Then it was so late in our mandate that we didn't get it started when the election was called and of course the new government cancelled it. I understand that. I'm not bitter or angry about that. But that was a case where an audit for value would not have justified that road. You can make the argument that it shouldn't be built, but I think there are other considerations that go into these kinds of decisions, and in that case I felt the road was indeed justified.

So for that reason I shall be voting against this bill.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I will be supporting the bill. I must say this is a topic that was debated in the public accounts committee during the entire reign of Mr Laughren when he was the finance minister. I understand the comments he's just made, but the topic is accountability and I think the public demands more accountability for that hard-earned tax dollar, so I encourage all members to support the bill.

1150

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** This is a rather interesting bill. I always look at the motivations of various bills that we see out there. This government is embarking upon an attack on the people who are mentioned in this bill in so many ways that I am afraid that the way they will view this, whether they should or not, is as an attack on their integrity and on their ability to manage hospitals, school boards, universities, colleges and municipalities.

The auditor already has certain powers to deal with these various transfer groups and I have found that to be an interesting exercise and a helpful exercise from time to time. But there's a general pattern. If this were not part of a general pattern, there would be much less suspicion from those groups that perhaps the government has another agenda, that the government wants to continue its attack. One of the ways it's attacking all these agencies is by depriving the agencies of the funding they require to carry out their responsibilities in the various fields.

A lot of them know the reason for this is the tax scheme the government has come up with, a tax scheme which is going to require the government of Ontario to borrow money to give people a tax cut. When I talk to small-c conservative friends I know, whether they are in the economics field, the business field or the Rotary Club, they wonder how it is that the government that is so worried about the provincial deficit is going to borrow money to give a tax break to people, those people being those who are at the highest income getting the most of it.

They can't figure this out. They say, "Why at the end of the Conservative term of office will there be \$20 billion more in provincial debt?" Well, that's because they're going to have to borrow the money to give a tax cut which largely benefits the richest people.

My Conservative friends — never mind the Liberals or New Democrats or anything — can't figure that out. My friend from Wellington can't figure that out. I've read where he said it was not a wise thing to be doing. The member for Grey-Owen Sound has wondered about this. The person who is now the Speaker, the Honourable Chris Stockwell, wondered about that aloud. The former Honourable — because he was a minister — Morley Kells, the member for Lakeshore, all of these people have wondered why the government would embark upon a risky tax scheme, as it is, in order that they can give money to the richest people in our society and that they would have to borrow the money, borrow additionally to give a tax break.

The people I'm talking to say: "Look, let's keep our services. Let's not close the hospitals in Ottawa that they're going to close. Let's leave that money there to do a good job for us in terms of health care. Let's ensure we have a good education system. Let's ensure our universities and colleges are able to carry out their responsibilities to make Ontario the truly competitive province we want it to be."

Yet, what do I hear? "No, it's more important to borrow some more money to give a tax cut to the most wealthy people in our society and add \$20 billion to the provincial debt." Now this is bizarre, absolutely bizarre.

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** What's in the red book?

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Please lecture on Kennedy.

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau):** Read the red book.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr Bradley:** I suspect from the level of noise I'm hearing from my friends on the government benches that a lot of them agree with me. They can't figure out why the whiz kids from the republican guard have sold this to the Premier and our formerly prudent Treasurer. They can't figure this out. So why not divert some attention by attacking these various agencies with a bill in the House that'll divert attention from the government?

Now the bill itself: Is it a malicious attack? I suspect not. But I simply look at the motivation of the government. I look across at my good friend from Niagara Falls and I say, "So young, yet so old." But they tell me in the Conservative Party that is the case, that the younger they



are the more right-wing their views are. That's what I'm told by many in the party.

I want to leave some time for the member for Kingston and The Islands, because he has some very important things to say about this particular initiative today.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** It's always so difficult to follow my colleague from St Catharines, because he makes such eminent sense.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the members come to order, please.

**Mr Gerretsen:** It bears repeating that this is supposed to be the government of common sense, yet what are they doing? They are borrowing \$20 billion over the next four to five years in order to give a tax cut to their wealthy friends. Let's not forget that 90% of the tax cut, \$4.5 billion, goes to people who earn \$100,000 or more. I think that's what we really should be talking about in the House. If that money were left in the system, not only would we not be increasing the public debt of the province but we would also still have money available to look after the health care of this province properly and to look after the education system of this province properly.

In dealing with this bill, let me just say that I congratulate the member for Niagara Falls for coming up with a bill that I can certainly support.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Brantford, come to order.

**Mr Gerretsen:** But let's hope we use some real common sense in the way in which this bill is going to be applied, because there are many situations where we have organizations that receive relatively small amounts of money from the province in one way or the other or through one of its agencies. I would hope the audit they would be subjected to is not going to cost more than the actual dollars they're receiving from the province.

I congratulate him on this bill. I will support him on it because I think it is the right way to go. I think it will lead to greater accountability. But let's make sure that the way the bill will be implemented will be in a real commonsense way, not in the revolutionary sense that these Common Sense Revolutionaries normally talk about.

**The Acting Speaker:** The mover has two minutes to sum up.

**Mr Maves:** I thank my colleagues on all sides of the House for their comments and support on the bill.

I can't let the member for St Catharines's comments go unresponded to. He has said there should be no growth in the debt over the next four years. The only way we could do that is if we had a zero deficit over the next four years. So he supports faster, deeper cuts. Good. It's good to have that on the record.

I'd like to say, speaking to the motivation of the government, that there is no motivation for the government because this is a private member's bill, and the traditions of this House are that the government doesn't interfere with private members' bills. They haven't interfered with this bill. I respect the traditions of this House, and this is my private member's bill, not a government bill.

Some have raised questions about duplication and growth of bureaucracy. I would like to say that last year the Provincial Auditor did 18 value-for-money audits of branches of ministries in the government. If this bill passes, they won't be increasing or doubling the size of their office; they will simply take their 84 staff, down from about 120 a few years ago, and instead of looking into branches of ministries, they'll maybe check into one of the 20-plus universities or one of the 800-plus municipalities or one of the 220 hospitals in the province. They'll do that because, regardless of what the institution is, if the taxpayers' money is going into a government institution to fund certain activities in that institution, they have the right and they deserve from this government and from all members of this House to know that that money is being spent appropriately. That's what this bill is all about.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time provided for private members' business has expired.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF  
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS ACT, 1996  
LOI DE 1996 SUR L'ORDRE  
DES ÉDUCATRICES ET DES ÉDUCATEURS  
DE LA PETITE ENFANCE DE L'ONTARIO

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** We will deal first with ballot item number 49, standing in the name of Mrs McLeod. If any members are opposed to a vote on this ballot item, will they please rise.

Mrs McLeod has moved second reading of Bill 90. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 94(k), the bill is referred to committee of the whole House.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I suggest it is appropriate for it to go to a committee of the Legislature rather than committee of the whole House so it would get some further consideration. Perhaps social development.

**The Acting Speaker:** You would like it to go to the standing committee on social development? You can certainly ask that. Is that agreed? No? Okay, all those in favour of the bill going to the social development committee please rise and remain standing.

Would the members take their seats, please. There is not a majority in favour; therefore, the bill will be referred to the committee of the whole House.

ACCOUNTABILITY IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996  
LOI DE 1996 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION  
DE LA RESPONSABILISATION

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** We will now deal with ballot item number 50, standing in the name of Mr Maves. If any members are opposed to this motion, please rise.

Mr Maves has moved second reading of Bill 89. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye." Those opposed please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.



I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to standing order 94(k), the bill is referred to committee of the whole House.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** No, I would request that the bill be sent to the standing committee on general government.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there authority that the bill be sent to the standing committee on general government? All those in favour of the motion please rise and remain standing.

Please take your seats. The majority is in favour of the bill being referred to the general government committee.

The House stands adjourned until 1:30 this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1202 to 1332.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### PAEDIATRIC CARE

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** Today I rise on the matter we raised yesterday in the House regarding Kathy and Dale Mutter and their daughter Quincy. The minister said that all it takes to get a new doctor in this province is to make a simple call to his office. Let me remind the House what the Mutters had to go through to get a doctor for their daughter.

They and their doctor spent a week trying to find a paediatric cardiologist, but to no avail. Then the parents called Jim Wilson's office and were told to call the College of Physicians and Surgeons. One of my staff called Wilson's office on behalf of the Mutters and was told the exact same thing. Then the college gave the Mutters the name of a doctor who had already turned them down and the name of a doctor at Sick Kids who would only consider giving them an appointment next March or April.

It was only when the Mutters came down to Queen's Park and we asked you to do something about the deplorable situation that the Mutters got a doctor for their baby. The Mutters made the phone call, my office also made the phone call and you did nothing. Then we raised the issue in the House. All of a sudden you were ready to act.

Minister, I will take you at your word. I invite all Ontarians who, like the Mutters, are caught in the middle of this government's bungled negotiations and can't find a doctor: Call on Jim Wilson himself at 327-4300. But be warned because, as the Mutters found out —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I appreciate what you're doing, but signs are out of order, and giving out a minister's phone number too is I think pushing it to some degree.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** It's public information.

**The Speaker:** I understand, but he first off has a sign. That's out of order too.

### TVONTARIO

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Ontarians have been strong supporters of TVOntario for over 25 years. We are proud of the successes our very own provincial

broadcaster has achieved. Here are just a few examples of the international recognition TVOntario has attained: Polkaroo, Ontario's well-loved children's character will appear on Chinese television starting next season with a potential audience of 125 million; TVO's top-rated, youth-oriented science show Inquiring Minds has also been sold to China's national broadcaster, to Japan's national broadcaster and to A&E in the United States. This has generated \$400,000 in gross revenue for TVOntario.

TVOntario continues to win international acclaim. The Alliance for Children and Television chose TVOntario as their first organization to receive their Special Achievement Award. TVOntario is a finalist again for the international Emmy's UNICEF Award and Canada's Genie awards.

On Tuesday of this week, I and a number of my colleagues in this Legislature participated in the on-air membership campaign. MPPs helped to raise memberships in TVO, thereby increasing self-generated revenues and keeping TVO a strong force in Canada's public broadcasting arena.

All this is occurring while TVO is in the public sector, provincially funded. TVOntario is ours. Let's keep it that way. Don't sell it off.

### VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** I'm pleased to stand in the Legislature today to discuss an announcement in my riding this past Tuesday that is of concern to all in this House.

In keeping with the government's commitment to place the rights of the victim ahead of the rights of the criminal in our system of justice, I was honoured to have the Attorney General, the minister responsible for seniors and Debbie Mahaffy present for the announcement of the new victim/witness assistance program for Milton. This program will provide victims and witnesses of crime, 90% of whom are women and children, with the information and support they need to avoid being retraumatized by their appearance in court.

I want to take this opportunity to reiterate what both the Attorney General and my colleague from Burlington stated so eloquently on Tuesday morning, because it is something we want to make clear to those present in this House and to all Ontarians, "This government will not accept a justice system that allows victims of crime to suffer twice — first at the hands of the criminal, and second at the hands of a justice system that does not respect their needs."

I implore all members of this House to take a moment out in recognition of November as Domestic Assault and Crime Prevention Month and remember the victims of crime.

### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** Today the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will introduce nothing more than a tenant destruction bill. It's getting close to Christmas, just in time for the Tory grinch to

take away all protection from tenants and leave many with nowhere to go because of unnecessary rent hikes.

The Tories have completely ignored the concerns raised in their sham public hearings and declared war on Ontario's tenants. I've already been through one round of public hearings with your so-called discussion paper. It was amazing that you didn't listen to tenants' concerns, Minister, in developing this legislation, and that's reflected in the bill being introduced today. I hope the minister gives his assurance that he will not limit consultation on this bill and that he will hold full public consultation. I hope this time he listens to tenants.

This government is now famous for ramming through controversial omnibus bills, forcing closure on debate and limiting public consultation when bulldozing through with bills. I hope for the sake of tenants that they will make significant changes to this destructive tenant legislation, or even withdraw it.

Al Leach tells the media that his plan will stimulate building of affordable housing, but there is no way this plan can do that. This plan takes rental units out of the rental pool. It gives landlords the green light to put a wrecking ball to their apartment buildings and rebuild condos. The vacancy decontrol is a fast track to eliminating rent control. This bill almost guarantees that once a unit becomes vacant by a tenant moving out, landlords will be able to jack up the rents.

The Minister of Housing promised landlords he would deliver, and today he delivers.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** In the last couple of weeks I've had several meetings with the tenants of the Walmer-Spadina area — there are many buildings there — and some of the buildings on St George Street. These are the buildings and tenants who live in the riding of St Andrew-St Patrick. They haven't seem much of the member there with respect to these concerns.

But I tell you, they tell me they're very, very worried and frightened about what we're about to hear from the Minister of Housing today. They're worried about the harassment they've had to face over the years and that that is likely to continue no matter what policies you introduce. They talked about a number of the ugly incidents that they've had to suffer with their landlords over the years, that they are continuing to suffer with respect to issues of harassment.

They're worried about conversion of their buildings to condominiums. They're worried about their rents going up. Many talk about the fact that they pay high rents as it is. When they hear that rents are likely to go up even more, they're worried about themselves and they're worried about the state of our economic affairs when they have to put more money into rent instead of spending it on other things. They're worried about this government taking off the rent freeze when landlords are not doing the necessary repairs to their building. They've told me that this minister is going to hear from those residents, and in fact all the tenants in Ontario.

1340

#### LATVIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr John L. Parker (York East):** I rise to bring to the attention of all members that this week over 15,000

Ontarians of Latvian descent celebrate the 78th anniversary of the declaration of independence of the Republic of Latvia, an event which took place for the first time on November 18, 1918. For the next two decades Latvians worked hard to build a strong, proud country, a country with an exemplary standard of living, a country which boasted one of the highest literacy rates in the world, a country known for its tolerance towards its citizens of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

During the Second World War, years of hard work, pride and perseverance came to an end with periods of Nazi and Soviet occupation. In the ensuing decades, the Soviets succeeded in destroying the work of 20 years of independence.

Since regaining its independence in 1991, Latvia has enjoyed a peaceful period of renewal and rebirth. It is now on the road to becoming once again a proud and tolerant nation and a responsible member of the international community.

Ontario is a province that may gratefully boast a thriving Latvian Canadian community whose hardworking members have enriched our society in many ways. On behalf of the government of Premier Mike Harris, I am pleased to take this opportunity to wish all Latvian Ontarians our congratulations on Latvian Independence Day and continued freedom, prosperity and happiness in the future.

I am pleased also to note that three prominent members of the Toronto Latvian community are with us today in the members' gallery: Mr Valdis Vagners, Mr Ivars Timbers and Mr Varis Pludons.

#### PAEDIATRIC CARE

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** A couple of months ago I brought to the attention of the Minister of Health the problems the Chiefari family were experiencing in attempting to donate blood for their baby Ryan's heart operation. Only after that confrontation did the long, difficult process begin to be resolved, and Ryan yesterday had his heart operation with his mother's blood.

Yesterday in this House I brought to the attention of the Minister of Health the problems being experienced by 18-month-old Quincy Mutter in finding a paediatric cardiologist. The minister's office subsequently intervened to find a doctor.

The official opposition is grateful for the assistance of the minister himself in resolving these two cases, but the urgency in Ontario's health care system continues and we should not rely on a case-by-case resolution by political staff in the minister's office.

The minister said yesterday we should feel free to call him with emergency cases. His staff made outrageous statements that members of this House needed to give the minister notice of any individual cases we might raise in the House. It appears therefore that our power as members of this House is being diminished so that from now on the new number for medical emergencies is no longer 911 but the number of the office of the Minister of Health. It's a shame for a system of health care. Ontarians deserve to be second to none.



## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Today the Solicitor General will be coming forward with a statement in response to Domestic Assault Prevention and Community Safety Month. He's going to be announcing a couple of more 1-800 telephone numbers, as if this somehow is going to respond to the very real issues facing many people who are victims of domestic abuse.

I was shocked, I was appalled and I was angered this week in this Legislature at the Minister of Community and Social Services' response to very real concerns being raised by women out in the field, women who work in transition houses and shelters, women who have surveyed the client population they work with, and survivors of abuse themselves who came forward to tell the story about what the cuts to shelters, to second stage housing supports in particular, have meant for women.

What they have meant is that women and children are in some cases going back to abusive situations because the supports aren't there for them and they are being threatened. They are being threatened, and the Minister of Community and Social Services could stand in her place and say she dismissed that evidence and that in her opinion the real threat to women was the debt.

It was one of the most appalling and shocking statements I could imagine a minister of the crown, particularly this minister, saying. To have today the response of the Solicitor General being one more 1-800-CALL-MIKE is totally unsatisfactory. It totally misses the point of the need of —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. The member for Scarborough West.

## SCARBOROUGH CHURCHES

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** I rise today to recognize four Scarborough churches that are celebrating landmark anniversaries: Wanstead United Church at 3340 Danforth Avenue is celebrating its 80th anniversary; Birchcliff Heights United Church at 96 Highview is also 80 years young; St Nicholas' Anglican Church at 1512 Kingston Road is in its 85th year; and Scarborough Junction United Church is celebrating 106 years at its current location on St Clair Avenue East.

There has been a great deal of change in Ontario in the past century, but some things never change. These churches have become landmarks in my community, serving the needs of their congregations for decades, and God willing, they will be around for decades more.

These churches are pillars in our community. They are caring and supportive. They remind us that in order to be a strong community, we must support and care for each other.

I am proud to represent constituents who can look to the future brimming with optimism while recognizing our past and the people and institutions that make our community a place we can all be proud of.

Those of us who serve in this chamber and walk the historic halls of this Legislature do so with a proud sense of the past. Let us all take that feeling back to our constituents and share it with those we serve by recognizing the incredible achievements to be found in our own backyards.

To the clergy and congregations at these churches, I say congratulations, thank you and all the best in the next 80 years.

## SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I have a message from the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, signed by his own hand.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The Lieutenant Governor transmits supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 1997, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today a member from the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Mr Andrew Thomson. Welcome.

We also have a Korean delegation. Welcome, as well.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** As Domestic Assault Prevention and Community Safety Month continues, I am pleased to announce, along with my colleague the Honourable Dianne Cunningham, a new service for victims of crime, reinforcing our commitment to safeguard victims' rights and rebalance the scales of justice in favour of the victim.

Sadly, these goals are particularly significant during Domestic Assault Prevention Month. Many of those seeking help through programs for victims of crime are women who have been victimized by domestic assault. This initiative will empower them to find the help they need when they need it.

Effective today, a toll-free number, 1-888-579-2888, can bring help to crime victims right into their own homes, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from anywhere in the province. It's free, available in English and French and as easy to access as a local phone call.

The automated information and referral service, AIRS, is an automated voice tape providing general information on the criminal justice system, from arrest to parole and probation.

1350

The victim notification service, VNS, allows callers to request or provide certain information on a specific adult offender in the Ontario corrections system by leaving a voice message. Those calls will be acknowledged by the next business day, and in early 1997 this system will be automated.

Next month a third service will be added, allowing callers person-to-person contact with information counsel-

lors across the province who can outline the services for victims of crime in the caller's home community. This telephone service brings us closer to our vision of seamless support to those who have been affected by crime no matter where they are in Ontario, no matter where they are in our justice system.

As we craft a new vision for public safety in Ontario I am proud of our commitment, and especially today of our follow-through in providing support to victims of crime. We are working to make the streets and communities of Ontario safer for everyone. AIRS and VNS particularly will benefit those women in Ontario who have suffered the violation of feeling unsafe in their own homes. It is a very important step towards restoring public confidence in Ontario's criminal justice system.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL HARMONIZATION ACCORD

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I am very pleased to inform the House today of a ground-breaking national agreement on environmental protection. Yesterday the Canadian Council of Environment Ministers endorsed the Canada-wide accord on environmental harmonization at a meeting held here in Toronto.

This accord sets out the principles for governments across Canada to coordinate their resources and efforts to enhance overall environmental protection for Canadians. As governments we have had to recognize that environmental issues extend across provincial and federal borders. Consequently, having a patchwork of different standards, regulations and approaches in each of Canada's jurisdictions has not been in the best interests of environmental protection. In fact it has been detrimental, as consistency and clarity have suffered as provinces took different approaches on similar issues.

The harmonization accord sets the stage for many subagreements on specifics like standards, inspections, environmental assessments and enforcement. Once these subagreements have been finalized, beginning at our next council meeting in May we will have an unprecedented harmony on environmental processes across Canada.

This is good news for the environment. Ontario's inspectors will work in concert with federal inspectors to cover more ground with greater efficiency. We will see better environmental protection for our tax dollars. This is also good news for businesses, especially those that have operations in several jurisdictions. No longer will they have to comply with a different set of rules for each province, with added obligations to the federal environment ministry. Consistent standards will encourage consistent compliance with less red tape for businesses.

The endorsement of the harmonization accord also speaks to the willingness of governments across Canada of all political stripes to unite so that we may deal with our common concerns.

I was proud to act as chairman at the table, where political differences were set aside so that our environment could be better served. I want to thank the former Minister of Environment and Energy, the Honourable Brenda Elliott, for her work as my predecessor as chair of this conference.

This national harmonization accord will encourage provinces to think beyond their borders when addressing environmental issues. It also lays the groundwork for future cooperation so that environmental concerns are not dealt with in isolation.

I am very pleased with what this accord means for our environment. I look forward to further progress and further enhancement of environmental protection in this great province.

#### RENT REGULATION

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Today I will be introducing the Tenant Protection Act for first reading. This legislation contains long-overdue improvements to the system of rent regulation in Ontario. Over the years successive governments have placed increasing restrictions on the rental housing market in Ontario, often with the best of intentions but, more often than not, with worse results.

Tenants have not always been well served by rent controls. Rent controls have created housing stock that is crumbling and requires billions of dollars in repairs. They have created a swamp of bureaucracy that means it takes months to settle a basic dispute between a tenant and a property owner. And they have killed new building for over two decades. Today, the vacancy rate is below 1% in some communities, leaving tenants with little or no choice of rental housing.

To be fair, there are aspects of the current system that work very well for tenants, such as the protection they currently receive from unfair rent increases and arbitrary evictions.

Our goal in reforming the system was to keep those aspects of it that work and fix those that do not. We have listened to find out what the public thinks. In that regard, I would like to thank the members of the standing committee on general government, which conducted public hearings in nine communities across Ontario during August and September. The committee received a great deal of valuable information and input from the public, and that input is reflected in the legislation which I will be introducing this afternoon.

In simple terms, we want to apply some common sense to the situation, so we are combining the hodgepodge of laws dealing with rental housing into just one single piece of legislation. Our new Tenant Protection Act combines the best aspects of the Rent Control Act, the Landlord and Tenant Act, the Rental Housing Protection Act, the Municipal Amendment Act, the Residents' Rights Act and the Land Lease Statute Law Amendment Act.

The central elements of the act are straightforward: Tenants must be protected from unfair rent increases; buildings must be properly maintained; we must encourage more rental housing to be built; and the entire system must be simplified and made less expensive for the taxpayer.

The new law will continue to protect tenants from unfair rent increases by keeping the annual rent control guideline. The guideline is 2.8% this year and 2.8% next year. I might add that that's the lowest guideline in the 20-year history of rent regulation in Ontario.



Tenants will continue to enjoy the many other valuable protections to which they've been entitled for many years, and I'll list just a few. Tenants will only receive one rent increase each year.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** That's mighty decent of you.

**Hon Mr Leach:** That's the same as it is now.

Tenants can apply for a rent refund for poor maintenance or lower rent for reduced services. Tenants can apply to challenge illegal rent increases and illegal extra charges. Tenants continue to be protected from arbitrary evictions.

All of these protections and more remain in place for tenants, as long as the tenant continues to live in the apartment. When a tenant moves out and the apartment becomes vacant, the property owner can negotiate a new rent with a new tenant. When a tenant moves in, that tenant will be protected by rent control and all other protections afforded to other tenants.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** That is insulting.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. The member for Oakwood and member for Oriole.

**Hon Mr Leach:** In effect, we're moving from a system that protects apartments to a system that protects the individual.

Another important feature of the legislation is that it will improve maintenance. There are any number of apartment buildings in this province with literally dozens of work orders for maintenance. The Tenant Protection Act gets tough with property owners who fail to take care of their buildings and makes them subject to a maximum fine of \$100,000 for poor maintenance.

Our new legislation will improve the buildings for tenants, and our new legislation will give the property owners the incentive to improve their buildings.

In order to simplify the system, the new regulation moves disputes between tenants and property owners out of the courts and into a less formal system of adjudication, which will be known as the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal. The system is so slow that right now it can take months even to get out a crack dealer who threatens not only the landlord but all other tenants in the building. The new tribunal will cut down the time to as little as 15 days, and that's an overdue change that benefits both the tenant and the property owner.

1400

Not least of all, this legislation represents a crucial step in creating a climate where the private market will again invest in the rental real estate market.

By making these changes, along with other changes to the property tax system, the planning system, the building code and the municipal development charges, we hope to increase the supply of rental housing in the province and increase the choices for tenants.

With this legislation we are moving to create a strong and healthy housing market for Ontario. We are protecting tenants against unfair rent increases and arbitrary evictions, we are improving maintenance and we are helping to increase the supply of new rental housing. We are creating a balanced system which will benefit tenants, property owners and taxpayers.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In view of the number and the importance of the ministerial statements today, I would ask for unanimous consent that we extend the period for responses to 10 minutes.

**The Speaker:** The member for Algoma has requested unanimous consent to extend the responses to 10 minutes. Agreed? No.

Responses, the official opposition.

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** Mr Minister, you can run but you can't hide, even if you don't give us that other five minutes to respond to this thing.

Let me tell you something. What you have just introduced is not a tenant protection act; this is a tenant rejection act. You have let down the tenants. They warned you from the beginning that you were not looking out for their interests. That New Directions paper you published was unanimously attacked by tenants across the province during public hearings, for which you did not turn up for even one. You came to the first hearing and then disappeared. You started running then. You said you are there to protect tenants and for the interests of tenants. You were turning up at every landlord event you could find, but we could not find you at any tenant rallies or any tenant discussions at all.

As Liberals, we are very concerned about the provision in this bill that removes rent controls on apartments as they become vacant. You know that 20% to 25% of tenants move every year. Within four years we will have no rent control in this province. That's your plan. Why don't you just come clean and tell us all that you Conservatives are against rent control and you will eliminate rent control in four years? You know that; I know that; the tenants know that. The landlords also know that you're doing something for them. I'm telling you, Mr Minister, you can run but you can't hide.

As Liberals, we're also very concerned that when you remove almost all the protection from tenants against their homes, trying to turn them into condominiums and then demolish them at the whim of the landlord, you know that those will not be there in the short run.

Let me tell you this: Tenants are organized and they know they will be coming at you with full strength. We know we want public hearings, and we will have public hearings and good consultation. As I told you, you can run but you can't hide, and we'll be there for all of those discussions.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** We're here today to talk to a minister who has abdicated his responsibility to look after tenants and who, with this government, has abdicated his responsibility to see some reasonable quality of life.

The announcement we heard today is about the death of rent control: 20% a year. We're losing rent control. He's learning something from the Minister of Health of taking away the life support systems of something that matters to people. Evictions are already up in Toronto by 136%, Minister, thanks to your colleague's measures in terms of welfare. Family breakdowns are happening because children are having to move into hostels now. There will be less food for people as they have to have edible rent supplements from food banks and use other



measures to pay the rents that are going to be increased, because every single year under this legislation, 20% of the properties are going to be vacated.

We're going to see an attack not just on poor people but on average working people, people out there who are going to pay for the extremism on the part of this government taking away the protection people have. The Rental Housing Protection Act will take away apartments right out from under people. They don't have to wait. The protection that's being offered in this legislation is fundamentally inadequate and reflects a total lack of respect on the part of this minister of this government towards the people he has the responsibility to look after.

There is not one single change in this legislation that reflects the hearings that were held across this province. There is no sign that this government listens to anyone. When it comes to the interests of tenants, the 50,000 tenants in the honourable minister's riding, they will be listening, they will be paying attention to the fact that there will be people hurt because of this legislation, that this is the death of rent control and nothing less than that.

Minister, you will be called to account. We will be looking for you to stand up and take the medicine for having brought this into the House today.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL HARMONIZATION ACCORD

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** The announcement by the Minister of Environment and Energy is not good news; the announcement is bad news for the environment. Ontario should be taking the lead to set and enforce the very toughest standards, the very highest standards, not hide behind watered down standards weakened by provincial regimes that care very little for the environment. This really represents the dumbing down of environmental standards and environmental enforcement in Ontario.

#### VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** The announcement by the Solicitor General today tells abused women that they will suffer twice: once at the hand of their violent husbands and once at the hand of the government, which seeks to introduce a 1-800 number instead of dealing with the very real tragedy.

I'd like to know, where was the minister responsible for women's issues when this was being crafted? Quite frankly, shame on both of you for perpetrating this for women in this province.

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** Women asked for it, that's what happened.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** They asked for second-stage housing, Dianne, they asked for those supports and you cut them.

#### *Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Could the government members come to order, please. There's a discussion going on among the many; it's a din and it's very difficult to hear. I ask that if you're going to have a meeting, go out in your lobby and have the meeting there. It's very difficult as it is. Responses, third party.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Very quickly, because of course with the rent control issue it is primary in our minds today, but with respect to the Solicitor General's announcement, the minister responsible for women's issue is right: Women have asked for this information but they want this information backed up with real services.

They want to know that when this line, this 1-888 line, tells them someone has been released from jail, they're going to get the supports they need to keep themselves and their families safe. So while this is good news for some people, if it's not followed up with strong shelter services and strong policing services and strong court services, it means absolutely nothing.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL HARMONIZATION ACCORD

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** The minister is on his feet again today giving yet more bad news for the environment. This is not about harmonization; it is about a race to the bottom. The federal Liberal government is not only getting out of the business of standard-setting, but it's also giving up responsibility for enforcement and monitoring.

Given that the Harris government continues to lower standards rather than improve them, is deregulating and firing enforcement and monitoring staff and cutting budgets, it is a dark day indeed and all members in this House should vigorously oppose this move, for the sake of the environment.

1410

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** First of all, I want to thank the Liberals for now supporting the rent control legislation we had introduced to protect the tenants of Ontario.

Secondly, with respect to what this minister has said and has announced today, this is the worst pap I have yet heard from this minister. He calls this bill the Tenant Protection Act, and it's like calling Godzilla the Tokyo protection monster. We have heard through the hearings people attacking the title of this bill because they knew by experience that it was a lie. They told the members of that committee that it was not a tenant protection package and in fact was a landlord protection package. So when this minister comes here and says, "And we have listened to find out what the public thinks," the public out there is saying, "He's lying."

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Fort York, come to order.

#### *Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Come to order. The member for Fort York, that's unparliamentary language. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr Marchese:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

To continue, there are a number of things here that are going to worry and frighten tenants. The bill's central goal is to jack up rents. That's what decontrol means. You move out and the landlord can charge the new tenant whatever he or she wants, whatever they can get. That's



what it means. He says no, but the tenants and what he's proposing in this bill say otherwise.

What this bill does is to offer a manifesto and a how-to manual for landlords to force people out of their homes. That's what this Common Sense Revolution has. It's a manifesto to give the tenant the boot. He's going to be paying a much higher rent.

This bill lets developers destroy affordable housing by allowing the landlord to convert or to demolish those buildings into parking lots. That's what this bill does. It gets rid of affordable rental housing that's available at the moment. They are not building, the private sector is not building, and they're getting rid of the Rental Housing Protection Act that keeps rental housing available for people who can afford to pay for what is now available.

Furthermore, he's saying on the second page that he wants to give landlords an incentive to build. He says that "we must encourage more rental housing to be built." The private sector has not built very much in the past, and their friends told us in the hearings that they will not build with this act alone; they want more. They want a red carpet out there with more tax grants or other kinds of support this government is ready to give them.

Let me tell them what one person said. Michael Howe of Norquay Homes said, "If the goal of this legislation is to get people like me back constructing residential rental suites, it will fail miserably." That's his friend saying that. This measure is not going to do it. They're looking for a different and a longer red carpet.

I want to call on the minister to talk to the tenants, to talk to Bonnie Drew, a tenant at 260 Wellesley Street East in your riding of St George-St David. Tenants in that building have been granted a rent freeze effective November 27. That means no rent increase until the landlord fixes the building. Minister, you've eliminated that. You've got to listen to tenants. You didn't listen to them in those four weeks of hearings. They were a sham, because what you've introduced is nothing different than what we've already heard.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### RENT REGULATION

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Today will go down as the day you killed rent control in this province. You can put whatever smokescreen you want to put on it. You can be as sneaky as you want to be and call it "tenant protection." But today you killed rent control.

Every year about 25% of the tenants in this province move from their apartments, and when they do, your legislation lets their landlords raise the rent of their vacant apartments by 20% or as much as they like. That will happen in markets like Toronto, where the rents are already 40% higher than in the rest of the country. Within four years, apartment by apartment, community by community, you will have killed rent control. Why, particularly at this time, have you chosen to abandon the tenants of this province?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** What we have here is a rent control system that is harmful for tenants. Fifty per cent of the apartments are charging below the maximum rent now; 50% are below what they can charge now. In Ottawa, for example, they have to give incentives to get people there. If landlords could charge what the maximum rent is now, rents would skyrocket under the existing legislation.

**Mr Gerretsen:** That isn't true, and you should stop trying to fool the tenants. This will not lead to an increase in apartment buildings. Even landlords have told you that. The tenants who stay in their apartments won't be protected either because your bill allows landlords to demolish their buildings at their whim. All the controls will be removed.

Won't you come clean and admit that even tenants who do not plan to move are now more threatened than ever before? Will you admit that you're making it easier for landlords to demolish buildings under this bill?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Yes, we are, and that's a move in the right direction. If you went over to my riding and you saw all those boarded-up buildings —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I want to say very directly right off the top, member for Oakwood, come to order; member for Oriole, come to order. That's a warning. Thank you.

**Hon Mr Leach:** What we're doing is that an existing tenant would have tenure for life. If a tenant chooses to stay in a building that's being converted, they can stay there forever. I think that's a benefit to tenants, not a hazard.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Minister, in the summer you released a discussion paper on rent controls and you held hearings for three weeks all over the place, as you yourself admitted. Every single tenant and every tenants' association in every single community that the committee visited said that they felt more threatened by your proposals. If your proposal is to provide for more protection for the tenants, why is it that not one single tenant or one single tenants' association feels that they're now more protected? Will you not admit that these hearings were a sham, that you didn't listen to one word the tenants told you, that your plan all along was to jump into the Big Blue Bulldozer and plow under tenants and rent control?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I think it goes without saying that the existing system doesn't work. It doesn't work for tenants; it doesn't work for landlords. This Liberal Party that's making all of these grandiose statements voted against the system that's in place right now. You can't suck and blow over there. All we do is hear the sound of flip-flops back and forth. What is your position today anyway? You said in your little red book that you were going to revise rent control.

We know the system we're putting in place is fair and equitable to both tenants and landlords. The NDP in those meetings said that they had to choose, and they chose tenants. We don't choose; we're fair to both parties.

**The Speaker:** New question. The member for Kingston and The Islands.



**Mr Gerretsen:** The people of Ontario don't believe you.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** In the absence of the Minister of Community and Social Services, my question is to the Minister of Finance.

During the election Mike Harris promised not to cut funding to the disabled. I have in my hands a report from the director of family services in the regional municipality of Durham addressed to the mayor and members of council in which it states, "There appears to be a very concerted effort by the provincial government to reduce as many people from disability pensions as possible." He goes on to document several cases where your actions are leading to disabled people facing cuts as large as 44%.

Minister, as you prepare your economic statement and even more cuts, can you tell the disabled why you have broken your election promise and why you're cutting funding to them?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** We are not doing any of the above. There has been no change in the guidelines to determine eligibility for disability benefits in Ontario and there is not a great move off of disability benefits in Ontario. The member knows full well that our long-term goal is to remove the disabled from the welfare rolls where they never should have been in the first place.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Either the government doesn't understand how its cuts are hurting the disabled or it doesn't care. We're talking about disabled people facing a 44% cut in their income and that's twice as large as your welfare cuts.

Let me read on a little bit further about the cuts as outlined by the director of social services. He states:

"These changes will certainly save the province a lot of money, but at what human cost? What social deficit will be created by this attempt to lower the fiscal deficit? Based on the abilities of the people who will be hurt by these moves, we must ethically bring this to your attention."

Minister, how can you stand in this House and tell us that you haven't broken your promise to the disabled when the director of family and social services in the regional municipality of Durham, who deals with these matters on a day-to-day basis, is saying that your cuts are doing exactly that?

**Hon Mr Eves:** As I said in response to the honourable member's first question, there has been absolutely no change in the guidelines to determine who receives disability benefits in Ontario since we have assumed office. They are exactly the same.

I also noted a report this morning where some people were musing about the fact that people were moving in great numbers from the disability benefit program to GWA, and that is not true either. As a matter of fact, prior to October 1995 the ineligibility of disabled was 37% of the cases that applied in Ontario and in August 1996 that number had declined to 25%, a decrease of some 12%. So we are helping more people with disability benefits today than when we assumed office in 1995.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Minister, even the bureaucrats in your own Ministry of Community and Social Services are questioning your commitment to the disabled. I will release two other documents this afternoon that are interoffice memos between various ministry staff people.

One is an interoffice memo from the director of developmental services who states clearly that there is not the support of the individualized funding there used to be. Let me just read:

"The government has not declared specifically what it is prepared to support or how far it intends to go in individualized funding, although there is not the expressed interest at this point that was evident with the last minister particularly."

1420

The other admission by your bureaucrats is that funding for programs serving the disabled, such as special services at home, will not be equitable among clients due to "the lack of funding available." If a similar request comes when few resources remain to be allotted, the field office may not be able to respond in an equitable manner due to "the lack of funding available."

Minister, I ask you again as you prepare your economic statement, why have you broken your promises to the disabled of this province?

**Hon Mr Eves:** To the honourable member, we have not. Special services at home have not been reduced in Ontario since we assumed office. As I already responded in my two previous answers, ultimately our plan is to move disabled people from the welfare rolls where, regardless of who was in government, they never should have been in the first place, and give them some dignity and some confidence that they will have the support mechanisms necessary in Ontario to live with dignity, not with less money.

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** My question is to the Minister of Housing. The minister said in his earlier response to a question from the Liberals that the NDP had a choice to support either landlords or tenants and that we chose the tenants. He's damn right we chose the tenants; 33% of all people in Ontario are tenants, and we decided we should protect the tenant and not the landlord.

You are doing several things with this piece: You are going to force up rents for people moving and you're going to force up rents for the sitting duck who's going to stay there. Minister, how can you call this a Tenant Protection Act when all you are doing is forcing up rents?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Thank you for that question. Yes, they chose one side over the other, and I think that's actually quite frequent.

Do they know that 80% of landlords own two or three units or fewer and that most of those landlords are hardworking seniors who have invested their life savings in a duplex? And what did you do? You threw away all their rights. You didn't give them any rights at all; you didn't even give them any consideration. That's the kind



of legislation that government put in. We're putting in a bill that's fair and equitable to everybody.

**Mr Marchese:** The poor tenants of Ontario. They didn't listen to tenants at all, and 70% of the depositions came from tenants, but they listened to landlords. This man and this government are transferring wealth from poor tenants who earn modest incomes to landlords who are already very wealthy. They listened to the landlords in this regard. When we listened to the various people who came to depose we asked the landlords, "Is this enough to get you to build?" People like Michael Howe of Norquay Homes said, "If the goal of this legislation is to get people like me back to constructing residential rental suites, it will fail miserably." That's what people like him said, people you support.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question?

**Mr Marchese:** I challenge the minister to produce one landlord or developer who says they will be building affordable rental homes in Metro as a result of this bill. Name one.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'll not only do that, but I'll invite the honourable member to the sod-turning ceremony that's going to take place in the not-too-distant future. You should try to pay attention when we have those sessions.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Lake Nipigon, I'm warning you as well today.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Am I out?

**The Speaker:** You're warned. No, you're not out; I'm warning you. Minister?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I stated quite clearly when we started the hearing process back in August that this bill unto itself would not start a building boom. But all of the actions that this government is taking by addressing the property tax situation, the building tax situation, all of those together are going to provide an incentive to get the industry back out there building.

We have a report, the Lampert report, that states very clearly that rent controls are a major detriment to the construction of new buildings. What have you got?

**Mr Marchese:** Mr Speaker, he didn't read that report. Not only that; he didn't come to the hearings. I don't expect him to, but I heard the depositions. He heard none. I read the Lampert report. I'm not sure he read it.

Lampert, the economist they hired, didn't say this was a major detriment. He did not say that. What he in fact says is that is a minor contribution towards getting them to build. But they want the red carpet, and unless you put that red carpet having to do with a whole lot of giveaways, they will not build. That's what we heard.

You keep claiming this bill will lead to better maintenance, but you're making it easier for landlords to let their buildings turn into slums. Right now, under our legislation, if a building is subject to a municipal work order, no rent increase is allowed. In your riding, the tenants of 260 Wellesley Street East in St James Town are getting a rent increase that takes effect November 27. Minister, why should your constituents at 260 Wellesley Street East get a rent increase if the building is falling apart?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'm not going to talk about the specifics of buildings in my riding, but what I can tell you and what I can point out is that one of the big

detriments to getting new units built, units that are badly needed, particularly in the city of Toronto, is the property tax situation, a property tax situation where that government allows a municipality to charge as much as six times as much in property taxes as for a single-family dwelling.

We are going to fix it —

**Mr Marchese:** So what are you going to do with rent control? How are you going to fix it?

**Hon Mr Leach:** We're going to fix it.

**The Speaker:** The member for Fort York, come to order, please. Minister?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank my colleague for that observation. It's nice to see the city of Toronto providing buttons at the taxpayers' expense to the members of the opposition.

The honourable member across asks how we're going to do it. We're going to do it because this government has the political will to bring fairness and equity back into the tax system, something that you refused to even consider.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. For 17 months now your government has been planning and scheming over the plans for your attack on the WCB and injured workers. First of all, you killed the royal commission. Then you set aside the Common Sense Revolution and threw the project over to junior minister Jackson, who spent a year meeting in secret with insurance executives and others behind closed doors. Then that report was issued but you didn't follow that up. Months later we have a leaked cabinet document that shows you've thrown out many of his suggestions but that you're still planning to take \$15 billion from injured workers and give \$6 billion to your friends in the private sector and that you're planning to ram through this legislation by the end of this December, a mere few weeks from now.

1430

Minister, if you won't call off the attack, will you at the very least announce and ensure today that there will be the necessary time to study such a mammoth document, because you're planning to replace the entire Workers' Compensation Act, that you'll provide full province-wide public hearings and that certainly —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** To the member opposite, I think your representation is certainly unfair. I would indicate to you that Mr Jackson did extensive consultation. He met with injured workers and he also received over 200 briefs.

When we announce our plans to overhaul the WCB, we are going to have a system that is sensitive to the needs of injured workers and that is also fully funded. As well, it is going to be sustained by the employers who fund the system. We are not taking out, as you took out when you did the deindexation and you removed \$18 billion from injured workers. We are going to make sure that our benefits are secure and fair.



I would also indicate to you that on three occasions I have announced that there will be public hearings. We will travel. This is a major piece of legislation and I have already publicly made that commitment.

**Mr Christopherson:** Minister, the only thing that's unfair about all of this is not my comments, but what you're doing to injured workers. The fact of the matter is that our legislation was balanced and fair and it improved the plight of 45,000 of the most vulnerable, and it had the support and involvement of the Ontario Federation of Labour. You've talked to no one and you've got nobody's support except that of your corporate friends.

Take, for example, Susan Green, whom I talked to this morning. She's 41 years old and lives in Woodstock. She has a repetitive strain disability that's resulted in a lifetime pension and supplement of \$1,368.94 per month. Under your proposals, she'll lose full cost-of-living protection which she currently has under our law. By the time she's 65, under your law, she will have lost \$118,000, 34% of her income. Minister, how do you justify taking that money from Susan Green and giving \$6 billion to your corporate friends? How do you justify that?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** To the member opposite, I think it would be more appropriate if you would spend some time looking at the facts. As you know, the benefits today are not fully indexed for inflation. You were the party that took away full indexation. You were the party that took \$18.1 billion out of the hands of the injured workers.

**Mr Christopherson:** Just for the information of the minister, if you're suddenly interested in facts, which you haven't been up till now, Susan Green received the \$200-a-month increase that we were able to provide with 100% inflation protection.

Minister, you have used the phoney financial crisis of the WCB as your shield to hide behind when you're attacking injured workers. The reality is there's \$8 billion in assets in the WCB. They've never borrowed a dime. Under our legislation, the unfunded liability has dropped by half a billion dollars in each of the last two years. Now there's another report, the second one that I'm bringing to your attention, that's been released by the federal government that shows that the rates for employers in Ontario are comparable or less than the majority in the United States.

This demolishes all your credibility. Will you agree at the very least that you'll analyse this last report, which was sponsored, I point out, in part by the Royal Bank of Canada? Will you analyse that report, study it and make your analysis public before you ram through your vicious WCB attack?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** To the member opposite, it's unfortunate that you have not taken the time to ascertain the true facts. You indicated that you had full support. I have numerous quotes here from your friends in the labour movement indicating that when you did your overhaul on Bill 165, you didn't have support. In fact, the Canadian Labour congress says this: "The Canadian Labour Congress views the NDP government reforms as a regressive proposal of deindexing which could take billions of dollars away from the incomes of injured

workers. It strikes at the very heart of the historic compromise for which workers' compensation was designed."

I can quote from OPSEU Local 595, which did not support you. I can quote from the Quinte and District Injured Workers. I can also indicate to you that the assessment rates in this province at the present time are 40% higher than in the neighbouring American states. In fact, our assessment rates are the second highest in Canada.

#### OBSTETRICAL CARE

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, while we were all at home during constituency week, a very terrible thing happened. One of our mothers whom we had, after several months of trying, finally got approval to send over to the US for prenatal care because she's pregnant and she's a mom at risk last week lost her baby.

You and I both know that there are very few things that could be more important to family than the development of a healthy baby. Some 44 days ago you promised the opening of a clinic in Windsor, and 44 days ago you said that would happen between 30 and 60 days from the date of your announcement on October 9. These kinds of things that are happening to families in Windsor are not acceptable. To allow there to be a question that we could have done something that could have helped simply isn't appropriate. Minister, we need your help in Windsor. We need doctors. We need obstetricians. I'd like to have your answer.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** May I say to the honourable member that I certainly express my sympathy to the woman she raised in her question and indicate that discussions are still ongoing with her community about establishing the clinic, that the government remains firmly committed to establishing the prenatal or perinatal clinic.

I also would add that in addition to that, serious negotiations and discussions have been going on with physicians in Windsor about establishing an alternative payment plan and moving them off fee for service. I understand those discussions are going fairly well.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Minister, yesterday you received by fax a letter from the president of our Essex County Medical Society telling you that your behaviour to date is totally unacceptable as a Minister of Health and a minister of the crown here in Ontario.

We don't know what kind of negotiations are going on, but what we do know is that so far it has been totally unworkable and simply not finding a solution for people who really need medical care. Our calls are going well beyond pregnant moms, but let me tell you, with the people we are getting to know whom we have had to arrange to send to the US, so that we as taxpayers pay four, five, six times the amount for the same level of care, I believe the heat is on for you to resolve this. We fully expect that you are going to negotiate in good faith, that you will come up with answers.

Several weeks ago, you already received the information you needed to designate Windsor and Essex an underserved area for doctors' services, and 44 days ago you already knew you were going to open a clinic for



obstetrical services in Windsor. You keep coming to us telling us what you're going to do and what your talks are about. When are we going to see the result?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** To point fingers either way would simply be unfair and would indicate the honourable member is not in touch with her own community, because the community is working diligently with the ministry. Meetings occurred very recently. There has been a growing problem in your area for many years. Your obstetricians' average age is heading up over 60 years of age, where they would normally stop doing deliveries anyway. This problem existed long before this government came to office. We are doing everything we can.

**Mrs Papatello:** And you're not doing a darn thing to fix it. You're making it worse.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** The honourable member is critical of the clinic —

**Mrs Papatello:** Very critical of the minister.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** — and yet it was her community that came to me directly and asked to establish the clinic and enter into those negotiations, and that's what we're doing. We're also going beyond that to bring some permanent solutions, not only through alternative payment plans for those physicians who voluntarily want to join that arrangement —

**Mrs Papatello:** We're not listening for the words, we want to see some action.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Windsor-Sandwich, would you please come to order.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Also, we're continuing to have serious negotiations with the Ontario Medical Association to resolve problems and frustrations that have been outstanding for many years on behalf of patients, first, and doctors.

1440

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** My question is again to the Minister of Labour. You mouth words about caring for injured workers, but no one in this province believes that anything you're going to do is going to help injured workers, and you increasingly have less and less credibility around the issue of occupational health and safety.

For instance, in 1995 there was a total of \$62 million committed from WCB revenues to the different agencies that specialize in health and safety training and prevention of workplace accidents. In 1996, you've cut this back by \$15 million, almost 25%, down to \$47 million. This has led to dramatic cuts in agencies such as the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and other organizations that provide these services.

Minister, you can begin to repair some of the damage to your credibility, because it's the only area where you've got any left at all, around the issue of occupational health and safety, by announcing that you're going to stop that \$15-million drain away from accident prevention and put that money back in. Will you announce that today?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I simply indicate to you that health and safety has been a

priority for this government, it has been a priority for my ministry, and we actually have a new vision for health and safety in this province.

It's a vision that was put together by stakeholders in the province. It's unfortunate that some of the unions did not see fit to participate, but for the first time we have a coordinated strategy, we actually have a new focus, we have a new mandate at the Workers' Compensation Board, and as you well know, many of the activities that were formerly funded in the clinics and in the agencies, that work is now being done by the WCB.

The priority function for the WCB today is to prevent workplace illness and injury, and we have invested \$415,000 into a new young workers' awareness program. We are working and supporting the Safe Communities Foundation. We are doing more than any other government has ever done to make sure that —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister.

**Mr Christopherson:** Minister, what a load of crap. You have not done anything.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** That's not parliamentary. I would ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr Christopherson:** It may not be parliamentary, Speaker, but it is true.

**The Speaker:** You've got one chance left to withdraw.

**Mr Christopherson:** I will withdraw my unparliamentary remark, Speaker.

Minister, they're nothing but words, cheap words that, quite frankly, aren't matched up by your actions. You said not long ago that you were going to maintain the staff of the Workplace Health and Safety Agency when you gutted it and eliminated it, and a few days later they were all laid off. They're gone.

You say you believe in prevention, but you're slashing and cutting the programs and the money that actually bring about those kinds of improvements. Let's look at the Occupational Disease Panel, and if you won't believe its importance because we, the NDP, say so here and you won't listen to experts in the Ontario field, what about international experts? Sixteen professors from the University of Massachusetts signed a letter to you saying, "Reconsider your decision and maintain the highly regarded and valuable institution." That's what they think about the Occupational Disease Panel.

What about the former chief medical officer of the United States Occupational Health and Safety Administration: "Failure to keep the Occupational Disease Panel doors open will be seen as a clear and deliberate step backwards in the eyes of the public health community worldwide."

Minister, for God's sake, will you acknowledge the work of the Occupational Disease Panel and ensure that it stays in this province?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** We do acknowledge that there is a very important role in this province for research into not only occupational disease but also the prevention of injury. That's why we now have as our priority focus at the WCB prevention of illness and injury, and I can tell you that we have not, unlike yourselves, reduced the number of health and safety inspectors.

I also want to tell you that the IAPA has been invited to Asia and the United States in order to articulate the new vision for health and safety in this province. People are recognizing that we're not content with the level of rate in injuries in this province. We don't want the number of fatalities. Maybe you're satisfied, but we're not, and we're going to do the job much better.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** We have up in the visitors' gallery the ex-member for York South, Mr Donald MacDonald. Welcome.

New question.

### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. As the minister may know, Inco of Port Colborne is a major employer in my riding of Niagara South. In fact, one could say that in the history of Port Colborne many parts of the community have been built from the dollars of Inco employees and retirees. Future employment at Inco and the spinoffs are related directly to the health of the mining industry in Ontario.

In recent media reports it has been noted that the mining industry is booming in Ontario after many years of stagnant growth. My question is, what has the minister done to encourage this growth and keep it growing?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I'd like to thank the member for Niagara South. It's true that mining is showing a remarkable improvement in Ontario. As he and the members of this Legislature know, mining is a critical industry to Ontario. We've been supportive of this sector through a number of policies, including freezing mining taxes and hydro rates, lowering and cutting worker WCB premiums and, in accordance with the Whitehouse mining initiative, reducing and cutting red tape and duplication while maintaining strict environmental standards. We have received numerous reports —

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Get lost. Come to Sudbury, live in my area and find out.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** Mr Speaker, this might not be important to the member for Sudbury, but it is important to the members in the House and the people of Ontario.

We've seen remarkable improvement. Total exploration expenditures in Ontario are expected to increase by 18% this year and the number of active claims is up 10%, to a record number of claims of 180,000.

**Mr Hudak:** I'm aware that the Keep Mining in Canada campaign recently has been urging the Liberals in Ottawa to adopt pro-mining policies. I'm not sure if the Liberals in Ottawa are supporting the mining industry. My concern at the provincial level, Minister, specifically: What have you heard from specific mining companies? How have they reacted to these new policies in Ontario? Most important, what does it mean for workers in communities like Port Colborne?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** That's a good question. We're pleased by the response at the provincial level and recent investments under way in Ontario include \$15 million by River Gold Mines in Wawa; in Kirkland Lake \$55 million at the Holloway project; in Timmins \$150 million

at Royal Oak Mines; and in the northwest \$260 million at the Musselwhite project, which alone created 750 new jobs.

Perhaps I could read a letter I received from a mining executive in Sudbury, who stated: "I have a choice in where to put our money, and during the recent years that conscious choice was not Ontario but was to expand our USA plant. As a consequence of your government, we reversed our anti-Ontario policy, the result being new jobs."

We're pleased to help bring economic prosperity and opportunity not only to Sudbury and the Niagara region but to the whole province.

### NIAGARA ESCARPMENT

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy, the minister responsible for the Niagara Escarpment Commission. My question is about Twenty Valley Estates development for the very wealthiest people right on our escarpment. It is said by John McClellan of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, a hearing officer, "If the province approves the subdivision, it would be the first such approval on land singled out in Ontario's Niagara Escarpment plan as an 'environmental protection area.'"

In the report McClellan emphasized the land's designation as well as its location on the bench of the escarpment: land agricultural experts consider ideal for growing high-quality grapes. "In summary, it is my opinion that the proposal is not consistent with the spirit, purpose and objectives of the (Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development) Act and the (Niagara Escarpment) plan.... To allow a subdivision in this location would be a complete negation of the principles that underlie the act and the plan."

My question to the minister is, will you in cabinet speak out for those who wish to deny this development on the Niagara Escarpment?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** There is a process, of course, that the applications go through. I am given the final decision with regard to certain matters, and I wait for the proper processes to be completed before I exercise that discretion. 1450

**Mr Bradley:** That's a non-answer, so I'll try this: This Niagara North Federation of Agriculture is on record as being opposed to Twenty Valley Estates since it proposes putting estate residential lots well outside the urban boundaries of the town of Lincoln's urban areas. It is stated by Mr Dave Wiley of that organization: "You must take very seriously the negative long-term effects that approving such a development outside the urban boundaries in the town of Lincoln will have on our VQA grape-growing and wine industry's ability to continue to expand and prosper. Rapidly growing sales of VQA wines in Ontario, the welcomed increase in agritourism traffic in the Niagara region and the associated provincial tax revenue generated will all ultimately be placed at risk if you allow such an unacceptable precedent to be set."

Minister, you have the opportunity. You have said that if there's a conflict between the environment and the economy, you, as Minister of Environment, particularly



as the architect of the Niagara Escarpment, would stand up for the environment. Will you stand up for the environment when this matter comes before cabinet and ask that cabinet turn down this unwise development?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I'm sure the member opposite is not asking me to intervene in a process, which is a very important process, and predetermine the results of that process that's going to be dealing with it. Therefore, I have made my statements with regard to the Niagara Escarpment plan. I believe very strongly in upholding that plan, and of course will reflect that, along with other input, with regard to any particular decision I might have to make. I don't know whether I've considered this particular matter yet, but I will consider it in that light.

**Mr Bradley:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Could I request a translation of the minister's answer, please?

### YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** My question is to the Minister of Finance. I have with me the latest bulletin on economic conditions and employment in Ontario. What it reveals, sir, is that the rate of unemployment is a catastrophic 15.5% for young people between the ages of 15 and 24, for the future of Ontario.

If we were to ask the question, are they better off than they were two or three years ago: in 1993, 970,000 were working; 935,000 the following year, 1994; and now a downturn, 930,000. The Common Sense Revolution promised 725,000 jobs. What has gone wrong? What specific plan do you have to address this tragedy?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** No one is ever happy, of course, talking about employment levels or unemployment levels in any province, especially with respect to young people. However, I point out to the honourable member that there have been some 127,000 net new jobs created in Ontario since the end of June 1995. We are working diligently to provide policies which we feel will provide incentives for employers, especially small businesses, to locate and expand in Ontario and employ more people.

**Mr Pouliot:** Minister, you're about to enter into another round of cuts, to the tune of \$3 billion from what we read. John McCallum, an economist at the Royal Bank and perhaps a friend of yours, a gifted person, indicates that the economic drag of those cuts will far outweigh the tax benefits. This is the world upside down.

Why don't you take the proposed tax cut that will benefit the wealthiest in our society and give it to those between the ages of 15 and 24? Give them a chance to be like the others. Give them a chance to be like you. Put them to work and the money will call back. Is it not more commonsensical than trying to force cuts to the tune of \$3 billion, where people will be victimized, people will be deprived of their livelihood, people will lose their jobs? Please come to your senses. You have that power, Minister. You're the one person who can do it.

**Hon Mr Eves:** The policy of reducing provincial income tax levels on taxpayers in the province of Ontario, we believe on this side of the House, will stimulate employment in Ontario and lead to more jobs being created. There is a very direct correlation between reducing taxation levels and increasing jobs.

You only have to look at studies done by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Overwhelmingly of course its members are small business people all across this country of Canada. Look at the study recently done by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce with respect to payroll taxes. We are reducing payroll taxes. We are eliminating the employers' health tax in Ontario.

I say to the honourable member, the overwhelming majority of the benefit of our tax cut is going to people who earn less than \$60,000 a year in Ontario. If those are the people you're referring to as our wealthy friends, they represent the overwhelming majority of hardworking, honest, taxpaying Ontarians in the province —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister.

### MARKET ONTARIO

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. Minister, you, along with the Premier, recently launched a worldwide business initiative that is now widely known as Market Ontario. This initiative will educate others around the globe as to the benefits of Ontario as a great place to live, work, visit, invest and do business. For the members of my riding in Halton North, this is indeed welcome news. We, like many other communities in Ontario, are ideally located to take advantage of a North American marketplace and boast a highly skilled, well-educated workforce to handle the demands of the new high-tech age.

My question to you is this: While the residents of Halton North are pleased with the announcement, they would like to know how your recent economic development trip to Japan, where you launched the new program, was received and how it will effectively benefit them and others in the province.

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** In response to the question from the member for Halton North, I'd like to say that my trip was very well received. I told those who have invested in Canada and those who are thinking of investing in Canada that we are deregulating in this province. We have improved the labour environment, we are cutting the personal income tax rate and we are being fiscally responsible.

That was good news to the people in Japan and I would like to tell you —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** They're not suffering. The people here are suffering.

**The Speaker:** The member for Kingston and The Islands, it's one thing to heckle, the other is to get right out of your seat. Please.

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** I would like to tell the member for Halton North that I think his constituents will be pleased to know that what we did was we put Ontario in front of Japanese investors. Our goal with Market Ontario is to do that in all countries. Our goal is to boost by 2% Ontario's share of direct foreign investment, from 6.8% to 8.6%. This should result in about —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary.

**Mr Chudleigh:** I imagine there's a number of jobs associated with that, which perhaps you'll include in your supplemental answer.

Market Ontario sounds like a great program, but there are always costs associated with any good program. My question to you is this: Can you clarify for the residents and constituents of Halton North what priority methods are being considered to carry this critical message to business leaders and potential customers around the world, and what are the costs associated with it?

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** There will be 240,000 new jobs because of this. What we will be doing is using dynamic media advertising, direct target marketing, a special promotional video, using business ambassadors as volunteers, continuous direct mail, special trade and investment missions —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. You've got to allow the minister to answer the question. Minister?

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** We'll be using special trade and investment missions. We'll be vigorously using trade show representations. We will be using our attractive Internet gateway for Ontario and using a new, promising database. The total cost, if you would listen, will be \$17.8 million per year.

1500

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the minister responsible for women's issues. Minister, you have been silent in regard to the devastating impact that the changes to the family support plan have had on women across this province.

I have a document, the family support plan business plan, that was submitted to the minister and to the cabinet in January 1996. This document clearly outlines the difficulties that the plan was going to have once the transition took place. Let me simply read from it. This is your document. It's the marketing and communication strategy part of the family support plan:

"The plan's clients will perceive this proposal as a major reduction in service (most especially support recipients — 90% women and children). The transition period will see a service reduction to clients" for a period of time.

It talks about how you're going to sell the plan; it talks about how you're going to convince the public it's a good idea. What we have seen is nothing more than devastation on women and children.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Mr Agostino:** Minister, as you were aware of this as a member of the cabinet, did you advise the Attorney General at all of the concerns and the impact that this would have on women across Ontario?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** Yes, I did.

**Mr Agostino:** Then it simply becomes a question of the inability of the minister to convince the Attorney

General or simply the incompetence of the cabinet in dealing with this particular issue, because it is clear that this government knew as far back as January 1996, according to their own documents, that this was going to be devastating to women and children in this province, and you've done absolutely nothing about it.

I have in my own office as of today 85 outstanding cases, individuals who prior to the change were receiving support payments. Their life was carrying on as normally as possible, and since these changes it is devastated.

Minister, you are responsible for women's issues in this province, and 90% are women and children who have been devastated by these changes. What do you have to say to these women and children across Ontario whose lives have been devastated and turned upside down and into total hell as a result of the move, and what influence do you have in the cabinet and with the Attorney General if he obviously didn't listen to your advice in cabinet?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** I've been a member of this Legislative Assembly now for over eight years. I can tell you that the family support plan has never worked. It didn't work when you were in government and it worked less when the NDP were in government.

In response, I'd like to say that we receive letters constantly with regard to —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The members for Sudbury East and Welland-Thorold, I want you to come to order and I want to warn you.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** I think that all of us receive letters on a daily basis with regard to the concerns, that over the years governments have not dealt with getting the cheques out to women who deserve them and who should have them required by law.

The letter I'd like to read is to the member from Sudbury, who has so much to say:

"Dear Ms Martel: May we also remind you that we picketed the Attorney General's office in June of 1993" —

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** What are you doing about the crisis now, Dianne?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** — "addressing the issues that are contained in Bill 82." I will go —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Sudbury East, that's it. It's the final warning. If I have to bring you to order again, I'll have to name you.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** Mr Speaker, I'll look at you and perhaps I'll get my message out. This is a letter from Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears. It was sent to Ms Martel, the member for Sudbury East. I'd like just to say that this has been an ongoing problem and I'll quote:

"May we also remind you that we picketed the Attorney General's office in June of 1993 addressing the issues that are contained in Bill 82." It goes on and on. What are you moaning about is the point. Please remember that your own government, the NDP, chose to ignore this very issue.

In direct response to the question, the member stated in his question —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Come to order, Minister.



**Mr Agostino:** You'll even put a temporary coat on their kid's back while you're at it.

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton East, come to order. Member for Algoma, new question.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** The interesting thing about the minister's response is that she was dealing with issues that have been a problem for a long time —

**The Speaker:** Member for Algoma, I need to know who your question is to.

## EDUCATION

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question to the Minister of Education and Training. Next Wednesday parents from Hornepayne, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Ottawa, Toronto, London, Windsor, Port Arthur, Arthur, Ontario, and other towns and cities across the province are going to be visiting constituency offices to see their MPPs to protest the cuts in education across the province.

They've seen the impact of your cuts on classroom education for their children; they are worried about the additional cuts that you intend to make; they see the agenda that you've put forward for changes to secondary school education, changes to the financing of education; and yesterday they heard you say that you are going to be introducing Nintendo methodology, an idea that casts a chill on all parents about their kids' education in the province.

When is the minister going to put forward a clear vision of what he intends to do for education, for schools and the province, or is he just going to continue —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Algoma, thank you very much for your question. Minister.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I want to thank the member opposite for the question because it gives us a chance once again to lay out a vision for education in Ontario here in this chamber. It gives us a chance to publicly say how we will redress some of the problems in our education system that were caused by the previous governments, including a funding system that the previous government failed to address that is not fair to the students of the province.

I know parents right across the province and taxpayers right across the province who are looking forward to having a better funding system for their schools. They're also looking forward to a better governance system: one that reduces the cost of administration, one that reduces the bureaucracy that spends money outside of the classroom, that has no effect on the wellbeing or education of children.

They're looking forward to these changes. They're also looking forward to a curriculum — finally a secondary school curriculum — that meets the requirements set out in two royal commissions and that focuses some of its attention on the 70% of students who will not immediately go on to college or university. A lot of parents and a lot of taxpayers in this province —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

**Mr Wildman:** The minister's so-called vision isn't shared by very many from most aspects of the education community. Last Friday the chairs of the GTA boards

requested an urgent meeting with the minister to deal with "the uncertainty and anxiety gripping the education community." On Monday a group of directors of education from across Ontario asked for a meeting with the minister and the Premier to discuss "a potential crisis in education that puts in jeopardy the future of Ontario's youth." On Tuesday organizations serving Chinese Canadian students and parents publicly expressed their "grave concern over the proposed restructuring of education."

1510

When is the minister going to start listening to these people: trustees, educators, parents and students? When is he going to outline a vision and a plan for education that gives them a meaningful input into the decision-making process?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I think this government has had a record, in the education portfolio and all the other aspects of government, of doing some things that are very admirable.

One, we have consulted with people across this province. I have met with board chairs ongoing for 16 months; I will continue to do that. Yesterday, I met with CODE, the organization of directors of education across the province, those people who are charged with the day-to-day responsibility of administering this \$13.6-billion school system we have. I can assure the member opposite that I will continue to talk to the directors of education and others who are involved, the professionals who are involved in delivering education.

On top of that, we will be looking to have consultations — and we are currently doing that — with parents, taxpayers and students because we believe their voices need to be heard too as we improve and build on the quality of our education system in the province. In the past, the voices of taxpayers, the voices of parents and the voices of students have not been heard. Those voices do not fall on deaf ears with this government.

## FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL JURISDICTION

**Mr John L. Parker (York East):** My question is for my colleague the honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. The minister is well aware of my personal interest and concern for national matters and my concern for the future of this country —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Parker:** — a concern which I am sure is shared by my honourable friends opposite. I expect they're interested in hearing the question and the answer I might elicit.

Minister, as I discuss national issues, I have heard it argued in some cases that Ontario is not committed to equitable treatment for all Canadians when it comes to rebalancing the federation and determining who does what in social and non-social programs. My question is this: Can you explain to this House how rebalancing the federation will benefit all Canadians, not just Ontario?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** At the first ministers' conference this summer, the premiers agreed to ask specific ministers representing the provinces and territories to develop a three-year work

plan for rebalancing federal, provincial and territorial roles and responsibilities outside social policy as well as social policy.

This work plan will identify priorities for rebalancing and it will establish time lines and monitoring processes to ensure that the work plan is completed. Together, the provinces and the federal government are taking the steps towards positive, gradual change to the federation.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The agenda for next week?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I have the weekly business statement. Pursuant to standing order 55 —

### *Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I am fairly sure everyone will want to know what we're going to be doing next week, so if you'd come to order it would be very helpful.

**Hon David Johnson:** Pursuant to standing order 55, I wish to indicate the business of the House for the week of November 25, 1996.

On Monday, November 25, the House will, hopefully, complete the second reading debate on Bill 82.

On Tuesday, November 26, we will resume second reading debate of Bill 86.

On Wednesday, November 27, there will be an opposition day in the name of the leader of the NDP.

On Thursday, November 28, we will debate second reading of Bill 93.

## PETITIONS

### SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government of Ontario is planning to make significant changes to the delivery and governance of education in this province; and

"Whereas we as parents believe that school councils should play an important role in education with clearly defined responsibilities limited to their particular school communities; and

"Whereas we as ratepayers are extremely disturbed that consideration is being given to abolish school boards and eliminate decision-making by locally elected representatives;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the present structure of school boards within the province of Ontario continue to have a major role in governance of the schools to deal with broad policies as advocates for the students in their community, to provide cost-efficient educational services and to be directly accountable to the parents and local ratepayers."

I join the more than hundreds, as we have already read this petition in and we continue to receive more.

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** This morning at a news conference pointing out the devastat-

ing attack on injured workers, Karl Crevar, president of the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups, presented to me a petition of 7,000 signatures that reads as follows:

"Whereas the Harris government is proposing cuts to the Workers' Compensation Board to shift the responsibility to the backs of the taxpayer; and

"Whereas we reject the Harris government's proposals to attack the injured workers of Ontario; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario did not intend to vote against our neighbours; and

"Whereas we want to build a better community and injured workers are a part of that community; and

"Whereas we say no to the Harris plan to cut injured workers' benefits, cut injured workers' pensions and future economic loss (FEL) payments, introduce a waiting period for benefits after injury, refuse compensation for disabilities like repetitive strains and occupational diseases, shift the responsibility from the WCB and employer to the taxpayer and privatize the WCB at the expense of the injured worker and the public;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Harris government to solve the WCB's problems without attacking injured workers; and

"Further, that the government must put the emphasis on a safer workplace and stop rewarding employers who ignore work hazards; full consultation with the main stakeholders; give injured workers the right to rehabilitation and to return to meaningful work; give all workers the protection of workers' compensation, especially at the banks, which must finally start paying their fair share; hold employers accountable for evading their WCB obligations; and give workers and injured workers at least an equal say in the system."

I add my name to theirs.

### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I have a petition from a number of my Cambridge residents.

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 80% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still permit a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

I sign the face of the petition, as required by the standing orders.



## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The following petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Occupational Disease Panel is an important entity, we, the undersigned, petition your government to ensure the ongoing survival of the Occupational Disease Panel. We believe that this institution performs an invaluable service for the employers and employees of Ontario in an unbiased and professional manner."

As I agree with the petition, I have affixed my name to it.

## LABOUR POLICY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from members of the United Food and Commercial Workers responding to a very vicious strike that's happening in Bancroft. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas 55 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 175 who are employed at the Bancroft IGA have been on strike since October 21 of this year in an attempt to gain a fair and just collective agreement; and

"Whereas the employer has been found in violation of nine separate provisions of the Ontario Labour Relations Act and has failed to comply with the Ontario Labour Relations Board directives; and

"Whereas UFCW Local 175 has filed a contempt-of-court motion with the Ontario Court of Justice in order to enforce compliance with the orders of the OLRB; and

"Whereas the employer, who is also the immediate past chairman of the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers, has instituted the use of replacement workers;" — I'd say "scabs" — "and

"Whereas the province of Ontario is witnessing growing labour unrest as a result of actions such as have been taken by the owner of the Bancroft IGA, in particular with the use of replacement workers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to restore the ban on replacement workers and bring forth labour legislation that restores a fair and equitable balance between labour and management, which was contained in the previous NDP government's Bill 40."

I add my name in support of theirs.

1520

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** I have a petition on behalf of the member for Simcoe East. I will summarize it by saying that it is in regard to the provincial interest in public libraries and is signed by 103 residents of that riding.

## RENT REGULATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I've been getting petitions from thousands and thousands of people, and it says here:

"To Premier Michael Harris, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Al Leach and members of the Ontario provincial Legislature:

"We, the undersigned, protest this government's actions against tenants described below.

"The Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants. Rent control allows for security and stability in their homes and communities. Uncontrolled rent increases leave tenants, their families and other Ontario communities open to eviction, personal distress, and contribute directly to social instability. We want this government to stop any actions that would allow uncontrolled rents.

"Further, this government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favourable to landlords for easier and faster evictions. This is unacceptable to Ontario tenants and damaging to Ontario's communities.

"This government also plans to get rid of public housing and has halted the creation of basement apartments and a new supply of affordable non-profit housing. These types of housing are necessary for low- and moderate-income tenants to obtain accommodation they can afford. The government must cease all actions that reduce the affordability and availability of these kinds of housing.

"This government has eliminated funding for United Tenants of Ontario, five municipal tenant federations and other important tenant services at a time when they're attacking all tenant rights. Funding for those groups must be reinstated so that Ontario's tenants and not just their landlords are able to bring their views to bear in government deliberations on tenants' rights and protection. A consultation process with tenants' organizations should be initiated immediately to develop a plan for sustainable funding for services to tenants."

I affix my signature to this in agreement.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I have a petition signed by some 200 residents of my riding and surrounding areas of Toronto which reads as follows:

"Whereas the provincial government has not given the citizens of the Toronto area any opportunity to speak on the issue of amalgamating the six municipalities within Toronto to create a megacity of 2.3 million people;

"Whereas studies reveal that amalgamation does not save taxpayers money;

"Whereas Toronto was recently cited as the world's best city in which to live and work;

"Therefore be it resolved that the provincial government undertake a public consultation process before proceeding unilaterally with the amalgamation."

I've signed my name to this.

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** I'm pleased to present a petition from the Clarington Public Library.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we believe that provincial interest in public libraries in Ontario is fundamental to the rights of all Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to maintain the provincial interest in public libraries by ensuring the continuance of the following:

"(1) grants to ensure that all Ontarians have equalized access to library materials;

"(2) coordination of resource-sharing programs such as interlibrary loan and Internet access;

"(3) policy to ensure the future of the network of Ontario public libraries;

"(4) provincial assistance directly to libraries at the service level, for example, through Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Service-North;

"(5) legislation that maintains the autonomy of public library boards in Ontario."

I agree with most of this petition and am pleased to affix my name to it.

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I affix my signature to it.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I've got a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith;

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre in the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years;

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre in the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers;

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre, and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided to the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

That's signed by Rhonda Mason of Cambridge, by George Mailloux of Tilbury, by Judy Mess of Courtright and others, and of course by myself.

#### SALE OF AMMUNITION

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I have another set of petitions from legal owners and users of firearms who are concerned about ammunition regulations.

"Whereas the NDP government under former Premier Bob Rae passed legislation, Bill 181, the Ammunition Control Act, which placed restrictions on the sale of ammunition in Ontario; and

"Whereas the provisions contained in Bill 181 are time-consuming, onerous and create unnecessary red tape; and

"Whereas the records produced as a result of the provisions of Bill 181 cannot reasonably be used to track criminals and are, in many locations in Ontario where such records are kept, insecurely stored and thus available for criminal use as a shopping list of homes and firearms; and

"Whereas Bill 181 was passed without any discussion with law-abiding gun owners such as farmers, collectors, hunters and recreational shooters: those who are most affected by the legislation; and

"Whereas Bill 181 will do nothing to combat the illegal uses of ammunition;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal the Ammunition Control Act, protect the rights of responsible firearms owners, and work for tougher penalties against those who criminally misuse firearms and ammunition."

I both sign and support this petition.

#### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I have a petition here which is addressed to the Parliament of Ontario and it's to end the spring bear hunt.

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 80% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

It's by signed by about 300 residents of eastern Ontario, and I affix my signature to it.



## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is rolling back the clock on workers' health and safety and occupational disease; and

"Whereas before the Occupational Disease Panel was established the Workers' Compensation Board dragged its feet for decades in acknowledging evidence that work was responsible for many diseases; and

"Whereas the independent Occupational Disease Panel's work is respected internationally; and

"Whereas a leaked cabinet document shows that Labour Minister Elizabeth Witmer is planning to abolish the Occupational Disease Panel, ending this independent voice and giving the responsibility back to the WCB; and

"Whereas the government needs to hear from the people of Ontario that taking money away from workers with occupational diseases is not the way to make Ontario a better place to live;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold full, province-wide hearings on WCB reform; to listen to the voice of the people calling for the preservation of the Occupational Disease Panel; and to tell the Tory government to call off its attack on the dignity and standard of living of injured workers and their families."

It's signed by a number of constituents and I've added my signature to that.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Mr Curling from the standing committee on estimates reported the following resolutions:

Resolved, that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997:

Ministry of Education and Training:

Ministry administration program —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Dispense? Is it agreed? It is agreed. We will dispense.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

## TENANT PROTECTION ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 SUR LA PROTECTION  
DES LOCATAIRES

Mr Leach moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 96, An Act to Consolidate and Revise the Law with respect to Residential Tenancies / Projet de loi 96, Loi codifiant et révisant le droit de la location à usage d'habitation.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Do the honourable thing, Al: Don't move it. Do the right thing.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I just did.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1532 to 1537.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Leach has moved first reading of a bill entitled An Act to consolidate and revise the law with respect to Residential Tenancies.

All those in favour will please rise one at a time.

## Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Grimmett, Bill	Pettit, Trevor
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Barrett, Toby	Johnson, David	Saunderson, William
Bassett, Isabel	Johnson, Ron	Shea, Derwyn
Carroll, Jack	Kells, Morley	Sheehan, Frank
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Skarica, Toni
Clement, Tony	Leach, Al	Smith, Bruce
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Snobelen, John
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Spina, Joseph
Doyle, Ed	Munro, Julia	Tilson, David
Elliott, Brenda	Newman, Dan	Tsubouchi, David H.
Eves, Ernie L.	O'Toole, John	Turnbull, David
Fisher, Barbara	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Ford, Douglas B.	Parker, John L.	

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise and remain standing.

## Nays

Boyd, Marion	Kennedy, Gerard	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Kwinter, Monte	Pouliot, Gilles
Churley, Marilyn	Lankin, Frances	Sergio, Mario
Cooke, David S.	Laughren, Floyd	Silipo, Tony
Curling, Alvin	Marchese, Rosario	
Gerretsen, John	Martel, Shelley	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 41; the nays are 19.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. Does the minister have a brief statement?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'd just like to say that it's an honour and a privilege to bring in a bill that represents fairness and equity to tenant protection.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY  
AND SUPPORT ARREARS  
ENFORCEMENT ACT, 1996LOI DE 1996 SUR  
LES OBLIGATIONS FAMILIALES  
ET L'EXÉCUTION DES ARRIÉRÉS D'ALIMENTS

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 82, An Act to establish the Family

Responsibility Office, protect the interests of children and spouses through the strict enforcement of support orders while offering flexibility to responsible payors and make consequential amendments to certain statutes / *Projet de loi 82, Loi créant le Bureau des obligations familiales, visant à protéger les intérêts des enfants et des conjoints grâce à l'exécution rigoureuse des ordonnances alimentaires tout en offrant une certaine souplesse aux payeurs responsables, et apportant des modifications corrélatives à des lois.*

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to discuss this afternoon the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996. There are many things about this act that are very important in terms of the development over the last 10 years of an effective way to collect support payments from those who are reluctant to pay them.

Yesterday we heard from three speakers in the Liberal Party who gave their version of the development over the last 10 years of the plan currently known as the family support plan, formerly known as the support and custody orders enforcement plan. It is important for us to recognize that this has been a developmental and incremental process.

When the Liberal government in 1987 brought in the SCOE plan, as it was called, there were many who opposed it on the grounds that it was very intrusive. There were many who felt that was a plan that intruded far too much into the family structure, into the privacy rights of individuals who owed support. In fact what happened with the development of that plan was a real sense within the province of the responsibility of parents to pay support for their children when ordered to do so by the court, and the gradual acceptance that it matters to all of us a great deal whether or not parents accept that responsibility has grown to the point where I don't think there's much dispute now.

We all know as taxpayers that when parents don't pay, we pay, because families and children do not have the support they require otherwise, so it is in all of our best interests to be supportive of measures that are going to be effective in terms of ensuring that support payments ordered by courts are followed through on by parents.

When we come to an act like the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, we want to be very clear that there are many things that we regard as very important. We also want to make it very clear that most of these suggestions, as they have come forward, were suggestions that were developed, plans that were developed by the family support plan staff themselves. Once the law was in place in 1987, it became very clear to those responsible for enforcing that act that there were problems with enforcing the act, and the staff very carefully documented those problems and provided solutions, well-researched solutions as to how some of that could be avoided.

One of the issues that was documented in the SCOE plan, which of course included issues of custody and access with the issue of support, was that those issues should not be joined in one act, because what they saw happening was payors using the excuse that they were not getting access or using the excuse that there was a

dispute over custody to not follow their obligation to pay support.

When our government was in place, one of the first things we did was use the information that came forward from the very dedicated staff who were running the SCOE plan and come up with some amendments to that act. It is really important for us to look at this as an incremental process, because at that point it was very clear to us that one of the issues was this issue of garnishment being seen in the employer population as somehow a stigma upon an employee, that when someone was not paying and a garnishment procedure was entered into, that in fact somehow reflected upon the character of the payor.

One of the things our party was most concerned about was that if the growing acceptance that people who owe support to their children under a court order ought to pay and it is all of our responsibility to ensure that that payment is made, then why should this not be done by automatic deduction at source, as are some of the other responsibilities of citizens, like income tax, like CPP, like UI. So the heart of the family support plan as we conceived it was to remove the stigma of garnishment from those who were employed, had an employer who was able to deduct at source, and institute a program whereby that deduction at source would happen.

I don't think it should surprise any of us to know that once those automatic support deduction orders were in place, the increase in the amount of funds flowing to those recipients grew dramatically as did the number of dollars flowing to the treasury of Ontario as a result of the assignment of family benefits. So we can clearly show and track and have all the figures to show that there was a substantial and dramatic increase in the ability to collect outstanding support orders once this became an automatic process.

What's really important for us to understand is the whole nature of non-payment of support orders. It is extremely important for us to be very clear why people do not fulfil their responsibility, and we need to understand that in the context of the conflict that arises when a relationship breaks down. In many relationships when there's a breakdown, there's a good deal of hostility between the two partners, and all of us know that that hostility often takes hostage the children of that relationship. It's one of the tragedies that is very clear in our day-to-day lives.

All of us read today the reports of the Stats Canada report on children and what children are at most risk. The children of single parents are clearly at higher risk and clearly subjected to greater poverty than the majority of children in this country, and yet, even where children are not in poverty as the children of single parents, they show many of the indications of distress and disturbance that should concern us with respect to their healthy future.

The paper speculated on no one being quite sure why that would be true for children of single parents who are not living in poverty, but concluded that probably it's because of the conflict between their parents, because they become the battleground of people who no longer have anything else in common or any other contact point.



As someone who has worked for many years in the field of battered women, I know that the issue between many partners around the non-payment of support orders is a continuation of the power and control politics of the relationship they had. So when we see that there has been physical, sexual or emotional abuse it's not surprising that we would find financial abuse as an aspect of the power and control issues between partners whose relationship has broken down.

1550

That's why it's extremely important for us to look at how we enforce support orders for children, because part of our responsibility, surely, to those children is to ensure that they don't get caught in the middle, that they don't become pawns in a power game between their parents. When I say that, I don't mean to imply necessarily that parents consciously or intentionally create this pain and suffering for their children. I'm not making any kind of claim of that at all, because I think many parents become so wound up in the personal animosity between themselves that it is hard for them to see what's happening with their children.

When we were looking at how to improve the plan, the important key to this was to take the payment of support out of the arena of conflict between two partners to ensure that everything that happened around those support orders happened through the director of the family support plan so that money no longer became the issue between two adults who had a conflict, and when children were being accessed by a non-custodial parent, the issue of money did not arise as a huge conflict.

Those of you who don't know very much about the process of conflict in relationships that have broken down may think that may happen in a few cases but not in many. But if you talk to the police, to shelters and to family counselling agencies in your community they will tell you how frequently before 1992, when the family support plan took effect, the issue of dollars became an issue of war, and it centred around the issue of changing custody of children at an access visit. Most family lawyers will tell you that the issue of custody becomes extraordinarily complex and that very often non-payment of support orders is a way to try and lever one individual or the other to a more generous response in terms of access or lever a joint custody situation where that is not acceptable to another party.

I cannot tell the members of the government often enough the number of cases of coercion that occur around those issues of custody, access and support and how important it is for us, in any piece of legislation, not to allow the payment of support to become some kind of lever around issues of custody and access. It is extremely important to retain that, and I am pleased that in this bill the government did not return to conjoining access and custody issues with support issues and removed one of the ongoing obligations of the family support plan, to enforce domestic custody orders, although I'm not sure that the facile explanation that this now comes under legal aid and there's no real problem with the enforcement of those orders is very convincing. However, it is a minority of cases, only about 20 to 25 a year, so we're not making an issue of that.

On principle we believe that the issue of payment of support should be a stand-alone issue, that each of us who has a child, each of us as a parent, whether we're male or female, has a responsibility to support that child as long as that child is dependent upon us, and that it is our obligation to ensure, through the mechanisms we put in place, that all of us fulfil that obligation equally. Otherwise, frankly, we are all disadvantaged.

When we were discussing and talking about how to make this effective, we decided that there were those major issues we wanted to deal with in an act: (1) to make this a plan that would create as much possibility as possible for the payment of those support orders, and (2) to do that in a way that did not stigmatize the payor but would in fact reach those dollars in a more timely way and not depend, as it had been for years and years prior to the implementation of the SCOE plan, on just relying on the goodwill of someone to occasionally send the dollars to someone else with no enforcement plan, which of course was real. It was to do that in an orderly fashion so we could be sure the money would come in on a regular basis for those who were regularly employed.

The whole principle behind the support deduction order and making that mandatory for all new support orders was to ensure that it was not stigmatizing, that this was exactly the same as the payment of other at-source items that were due, so that employers could not discriminate against a payor because of additional work for that payor but that the law would require employers to deduct according to a regulation scheme that was similar to the tax deduction.

It was important, we felt, not to distinguish between those who were paying on a regular basis at that particular moment and those who were not; that it was important for us to understand that those who pay often stop paying when they form another relationship or a different interest, when they are not seeing their family as much, when they have other issues in their lives, but to make this into such a regime that it became automatic and wasn't up to the recipient of those funds, either the child or the other parent, to take the action required to ensure that payment was made.

That was why we resisted very strongly, in the implementation of the family support plan, the suggestions of the Liberals, who did not want those deductions to be automatic for every case of a support order at all, who wanted to have that happen only when there was a default; and similarly for the opposition party, represented by the current Attorney General.

What we believed very strongly was that if you distinguish between payors and non-payors at source, then the employer knows who's in compliance and who isn't. That's when it's stigmatizing, because if everyone who has an order gets it deducted, the employer has no way of assuming that there's any problem with his employee. The employer only knows: "Here's the court order. This is a regular process. There we go. We deduct these at source the way we would the tax that's owed."

But if you allow the kind of opt-out system the Attorney General has proposed, that is exactly what you're doing. You're leading to a stigmatization of those payors who come under that act. The employer will not



know whether they are wilfully and angrily in conflict with their partner and therefore are not putting forward their money. They will not have any way of knowing whether that's the result of additional financial obligations and the inability to get through the court on a variance of the order. The employer will know, "Aha, it's exactly like the old garnishment process." The employer will say, "My employee is not fulfilling his responsibility." Therefore, those personal matters may enter into the impression an employer has of the employee, and that may not be fair.

What we were attempting will be destroyed by this provision in the act, that people opt out and only if they are in default do they then come into the plan. It's a shame, because what it does again is finger-point at people in a way that may be detrimental to their ability to make a living. I would urge the members of the government to look at that issue, because that is exactly what you are doing if you pass this opt-out provision.

1600

One of the interesting things is that the Attorney General did not follow his own suggestion to us. The Attorney General, the member for Willowdale, had a very elaborate plan that would first of all do deduction at source but would also allow for those who are paying, and paying faithfully, not to have to go through the process of having their employer involved.

Let me read to you from Hansard the discussions we had in December 1990, because it's very important for you to know what your colleague the Attorney General proposed at that time to deal with this problem. You should question, as I question, why, when he wanted to change this, he did not go to that plan. His suggestion was, and I quote from page 2869, on December 18, 1990, what the now Attorney General said:

"But the bill before us now is not without flaw either. What this bill seeks to do is to remove the middleman in the garnishment of wages for support payments. This reduces the administrative load of the support and custody office, enabling it to better spend its time chasing down the 75% of support payors defaulting on their payments. This is good, but the price is that 25% of support payors who are registered with the program and do regularly make their payments are going to have their wages, in effect, garnished also.

"I know the government says there is no stigma attached to this program and that no one will ever know because of the confidentiality provisions accompanying the legislation, but I am sorry, it does not work that way in the real world. In a large company, where there are many hundreds or thousands of employees, perhaps the employee is just a number and he gets lost in the shuffle and it has no effect on him, but most employees work for small companies and the reality is that there is very little personal information not widely known by co-workers.

"The government holds that mass collection of these orders, like income tax or pension contributions, will remove the stigma attached with garnishment of wages. I am sorry, but I do not agree." So he at least is consistent. We have to give him the benefit of the doubt on that. "Where a person has demonstrated in the past that he is willing and able to make his payments regularly in

accordance with the requirements of the order, my party and I believe he should be allowed to continue to do so. Certainly the problems associated with divorce, separation and custody battles are damaging enough to individuals. Is it really the role of the government to seek to remove any last shreds of self-esteem remaining? I do not think so.

"To this end," the Attorney General said, "I will be introducing two amendments to the bill. The first amendment seeks to allow those persons who are currently making the provisions of their support and custody orders to pay them directly to the director, without automatic collection. It is the responsibility of the director to forward these payments on to the support recipient.

"In this manner, an individual who has demonstrated the willingness and the ability to make payments shall not be penalized for the 75% who are not. By making the payments through the office of the director, it still ensures that the director has control over the situation. As part of this amendment there will also be the proviso that if there is a single aberration from the order without explanation deemed reasonable by the director, the director will have the power to revert automatically to a direct collection method. In this manner, the recipient gets the support, the director maintains control and the support payor retains his or her dignity. I ask, where is the harm in that?

"Similarly, the second amendment that I will be introducing," said the Attorney General in 1990, "will allow new support payors the similar dignity of presuming the willingness and ability to make payments, providing that the court is satisfied the debtor is likely to make the payments. As such, unless the court deems otherwise, first-time payors will be able to voluntarily make their payments directly to the director without presumption of guilt. Once again, a single failure to make payment without reasonable explanation will result in the imposition of automatic support collection.

"These amendments are designed and intended to protect the rights and dignity of the responsible 25% of support payors who do meet the requirements of their support orders."

It's interesting that in 1990 the Attorney General had a compromise position which would have seen that issue around the privacy and the dignity of individuals met but would have ensured that the collection of support dollars did not depend on court action by the recipient. The director would still be involved; everything would pass through the director. That third party would be the one who would be responsible. He had devised a plan which might have stopped the kind of conflict that we know happens when a recipient of support has to take court action in order to initiate things.

The members of the opposition are wondering why I am making such a point of this. I'm making such a point of it because if in fact what the minister were trying to do is what he tells us he wanted to do, to make the plan better and to ensure that there was firm collection and so on, his own solution would have met both his need around the 25% who very faithfully pay their support orders and the issue of what you do when there's a default. But as it is now, when there is a default, the



recipient has to notify the plan that there's a default. The recipient, if the recipient has opted out, as is envisioned in the bill, has to reinstate the claim with the director, and may have to do so at a fee. That is the other issue here. There is a money transaction proposed by this Attorney General, not an action on the part of the state.

One of the methods this government uses when it wants to change things is to try to convince the population of Ontario that what exists is broken. We heard it today from the Minister of Municipal Affairs: "Rent control is broken and therefore we're going to fix it by abolishing it." What we have in the case of family support is a very strong effort by this Attorney General first to destroy a plan that was working, convince people that it isn't working, convince people they should opt out so that his workload in his ministry, which has been heavily hit by cuts by this government because of your need to get revenue and to save so that you can pay your tax fee, takes precedence over everything else. That's exactly what's happening here.

I'm going to show you that this plan was not broken, that although it needed some of the tools you've brought forward, the preparation of which was all done by our government and would have been implemented by us in a second term, you in fact have tried to show people that the plan is rotten and doesn't work. Believe me, it's a very clear plot.

What about the minister's claim that the plan isn't working? The minister claims that the plan isn't working because there are outstanding amounts that have not been collected. That has always been true in this scheme.

One of the sad facts about this issue is that people who have an obligation and are ordered by the court to pay often renege on that obligation. We don't know how many hundreds of millions of dollars in support ordered by courts was never collected prior to 1987 because the Conservative government that had been in power for 42 years did absolutely nothing about that problem. There was no enforcement mechanism, other than the usual court order enforcement mechanism, available to citizens of Ontario under the previous Tory government.

But the minister says, as an afterthought, when their popularity was clearly dropping and they were in danger of losing the election in 1985, the then Attorney General was going to bring forward a plan. I suspect that plan looked pretty much like the Liberals' plan, because we all know how government works now, all of us together. We know that if the plan isn't on the shelf, you don't get to implement it in your first couple of years in government. So it's probably true that people within the Attorney General's ministry had been working on such a plan for some time before the Tories lost the election in 1985. That's probably quite true, because the Liberals took action fairly early on trying to find an implementation mechanism. So a lot of the research, a lot of the policy work was already there for them to take advantage of.

1610

We do know how much was owing once all of the applications came in from the people who had decided it was worth their while to fill in the application once the SCOE law came in. I'd be interested in knowing how many of you have actually seen how complex and

complicated those applications were. They were very extensive. Those of us who worked as advocates for recipients of support orders spent many hours trying to help them make sense of those very complex plans, and it depended very much upon the recipient being able to give information to the plan, as it always does, about the location and the income source of their partner. We do know that when that plan started, there was already \$300 million of outstanding money on day one because of applications for people who had had court orders over the many years before and who registered them with the plan in a historical way.

In many of those cases what was owed to recipients was thousands and thousands of dollars and what was owed to the government of Ontario was hundreds of thousands of dollars. In many cases those families had had to rely on family assistance in order to survive because of the non-payment of those support orders. So when that plan started as a result of the actions taken by the Liberal government in response to the neglect of years and years by Tory governments which had completely ignored this issue as an important public policy issue, already on day one \$300 million of money was outstanding.

It's really important, when the Attorney General stands up and tells us there's now \$100 million outstanding, that it was always acknowledged, because of the long history of having difficulty collecting on support orders, that we would see a growth in the outstanding amounts, that we could expect that this would be true. The issue is to track through those years and see what happened in terms of the collection of fees, first under the SCOE plan and then under the current family support plan. That is a really important thing for us to know.

In 1987-88, when the plan was first in place, \$19.9 million was collected. In 1988-89 that increased to \$88.9 million; in 1989-90 to \$104.7 million; in 1990-91 to \$134.9 million; in 1991-92 to \$166.4 million; in 1992-93, when we see the new family support plan come into place, up to \$221.6 million; in 1993-94 to \$297.5 million; and in 1994-95 to \$367 million.

So what we see here is not a plan that is broken, not a plan that's not working, but a plan that every year increases its ability to collect the dollars that are owed under family support plan. It is quite clear that the same problems for those who were indigent and had no dollars to pay were there throughout that period, and because the plan was taking on anywhere from 1,200 to 1,400 new cases a month, that those uncollectible dollars would grow over that period of time.

What needs to be looked at is the proportion of uncollectible to collectible and the importance of those which might have been deemed uncollectible and became collectible after a number of years and what effect that had, because the Attorney General's bill is very clear. The Attorney General's bill allows the director of the plan to close cases. It allows the director of the bill to say, "There's no possibility of collecting money from this person," or it says: "It's too hard to try and pursue this person. It's much too difficult. It costs too much to pursue this payor."



On May 26, 1996, which is the most recent date for which we were able to get the up-to-date statistics, so these are the end of May statistics, the total arrears owing to the plan were \$905.7 million. Of that, \$593.3 million was owed to recipients: to children, to youth, to their mothers in most cases, although in some cases, as we all acknowledge, the custodial parent may be the father. The arrears owing to the treasury in May 1996 were \$311.8 million.

Now how does that compare? First of all, we see an incremental increase in uncollected dollars, as we would expect to see under a plan like this over the years. In March 1995, the end of fiscal year 1995, the total was \$831.1 million of arrears. Of those, \$524.1 million was owed to recipients and \$307 million to the treasury of Ontario. It's important to notice that the amount owed to the treasury of Ontario has not grown very much. It's important to notice that the emphasis on collecting dollars appears to be not for the benefit of the recipients but for the benefit of the treasury of Ontario.

That's a very important aspect for us to look at, because although we saw an increase of about \$75 million in the total arrears owed, we saw very little increase in the amount of arrears owed to the Treasurer of Ontario. What we clearly have here is a situation where there's going to be an emphasis on collecting the dollars that are owed to the treasury of Ontario and very little emphasis on seeking out those dollars that are owed to individuals.

You may want to know why I make such a point of it. I make such a point of it because I have in front of me the Ministry of the Attorney General family support plan 1996-97 business plan. I don't know whether you folks on the government side have actually seen this, but it lays out quite a blueprint for the plan.

First of all, this report clearly states that Ontario currently has the best plan in Canada for collecting support orders. On page 10 of the business plan, where it says, "Comparison to Other Jurisdictions," the business plan says, "Ontario is the only maintenance enforcement program in Canada which fully offsets the cost of services and provides a similar amount as net return to the government." That means that it costs somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$22 million to run, and the government, as of May 1996, was collecting per month almost \$6 million per month. So when we multiply it, we know that the collection for the treasury alone was much higher than the cost of the program. In fact, in May 1996, at \$5.7 million per month, if you multiply that by 12, it was almost three times the amount of the cost of the program.

1620

This is the plan that the Attorney General stands up and tells you isn't working. This is the plan that the Attorney General has cut by 35% of the cost, to the detriment of many of the recipients. This was not a broken plan. This was a plan that could have raised a good deal more money if the same individuals who had been dedicated staff in this plan had had the tools that the minister is proposing in his act. It's important for us to recognize that.

The business plan goes on to say, "Ontario is the most 'cost per case' efficient program in Canada." This pro-

gram that he wants to cut the administrative cost of by 35% is already the most efficient cost-per-case program in Canada. We have much to be proud of. I think you should know that it's quite clear that those who are fleeing from the responsibility of paying their family support do not flee to Ontario with any great regularity, because they know that our enforcement measures are the strongest in Canada.

Ours is not a plan that is broken. Ours is a plan that needed the tools that are in Bill 82 to make it even better. Ours is a plan that could have found other ways of saving costs.

The business plan makes it quite clear why the minister has taken the action that he's taken. It's really important that members of the government back bench understand what the underlying issue is here for the Attorney General. It fits all the language and rhetoric that you're very familiar with, the determination of core businesses and the determination of how you look and make a business case for what's happening.

We read on page 2 of the FSP business plan dated January 18, 1996: "Renewed Approach — Proposed Core Business within the next 3-5 Years." This is 1996, so three to five years, this is the proposed core business. "FSP will continue to be universal for filing" — universal filing of orders — "enforcement will occur only on client request while adhering to strict program criteria. Reforms will also provide for the following: opting-out options; and broader discretionary powers for the director to close cases as well as action cases." Clearly this person had been speaking to Mr Snobelen because all of a sudden "action" has become a verb, as well as "languageing."

"This will restrict caseload" within the family support plan "to clients who are truly in need of this service."

The next piece is, "Trace and locate activities will be centralized" — and we've heard about the mess that the Attorney General has created in trying to centralize trace and locate activities — "standardized and restricted to what is reasonable, given limited resources and the need for equitable access for all clients."

All of a sudden we see an issue around getting that money for those children and youth being dependent upon whether it costs a lot to do so. The reality of that is that we will go to an even greater problem very quickly. There is everything in this bill to encourage payors to evade payment — everything.

It goes on to say that if someone flees the jurisdiction, the director can close the case. Well, let me tell you, my friends, many, many payors flee the jurisdiction now in order to avoid payment. They know that when they come back to Ontario — if you had the new tool of the driver's licence — and applied for a new driver's licence, immediately the FSP would pick up the case and continue to enforce it if they hadn't been able to locate them otherwise.

This plan very clearly proposes that if someone flees the jurisdiction the director can close the case, because the director is not prepared to spend the dollars that are required to track that person down in another location. The case gets closed and there's no automatic revival of that case. When all these computerized files that through Bill 82 are going to be available to the FSP apply again



it won't automatically come back on line. It will only come back on line if the recipient asks for enforcement. So what you are saying to recipients is, "You're responsible for seeing that you get paid." You're saying it is the job of a custodial parent to make sure that a court order is enforced. We've gone far beyond that in this province.

The Attorney General had suggested, as I think has been suggested on a number of occasions by FSP staff, that if you have an active file and an inactive file, if you have a computer technology, when someone applies for any one of these things that's now going to be attached and available for a computer check by FSP and appears on any of those files, it automatically tickles a response and the case becomes active. That's possible with the technology that's being proposed in the plan.

That is not what we're suggesting. We're suggesting closing files and then charging people to renew those files, charging people to get back on the system so that somebody can be tracked. That assumes that the custodial parent is going to know that the person has come back into the jurisdiction. Believe me, in most cases where someone is using financial power as a form of abuse there is no way the recipient is very keen on knowing that they came back into the jurisdiction except to get their children the kinds of resources to which they're entitled by a court order.

So the government is saying, "Well, this isn't very bad, because if some information comes forward to the recipient, the recipient can reactivate this." This is completely counter to the whole theory of ensuring that court orders are enforced by a third party so that the possibility of conflict does not arise.

It spoils, as does the whole issue of opting out, the possibility of this being just a normal fact of life: You owe money as a parent, you spend money as a parent, and it's up to the state to ensure that you spend it because otherwise the state will spend it. It's as simple as that.

Let me go on with some of the other issues the business plan raises, because it's really important for you to be aware of what is envisioned here.

"Administrative and legal enforcement of support arrears," says the business plan on January 18, "will continue to be core business but it will be done differently to improve the quality of service delivery." I don't think any of us want to argue with that, particularly. It suggests: "A smaller...centralized team will respond to daily client inquiries and scheduled actions. Legal services will be delivered locally by an enhanced panel and supervised by a smaller group of centralized counsel."

How is that worked out in the plan? The smaller group of centralized counsel — I'll say it's smaller. There used to be 17 lawyers who worked permanently with the plan as the central group, and in far-flung areas a panel would act on behalf of the plan. This minister has reduced the number of legal counsel to four when the caseload would be approximately 150,000 cases and where non-payment is a problem, as he says, in over 70% of the cases.

1630

The legal action that's required in order to get enforcement of these orders can vary from being very simple to quite complex. It can involve action against properties; it

can involve all sorts of issues that are quite time-consuming. It's important to recognize that what is happening here is an extreme reduction in available services to lawyers who are trying to represent their clients as well as to the clients themselves.

We brought up in this House the complaint of lawyers that they used to be able to talk to the lawyers in the regional office. They had direct numbers to the lawyers. They could bring a case to their attention. They could get a statement of arrears. They could deal with disclosure issues directly and they could manage those cases quite smoothly.

Lawyers now cannot get hold of counsel directly. They have to leave messages on a machine — on one of these message centres that I think will become the epitaph, frankly, of this government — and it's such a short message that's allowed they can't even get all the information on to one message and they often don't get answered. They don't get the response they need in order to follow through at the local level. That's the reality of this very reasonable sounding plan. That's what's happened.

Then we go to case management: "Case management will continue to be a core business, although services will be improved by an enhanced employee accountability structure, individual caseloads will no longer exist and staff will be supported with improved technology. Quality control of service delivery will be constantly monitored. Shift work, telephone outreach and expanded telephone access by clients will resolve issues at the preliminary stage."

It sounds wonderful. There's only one problem. All of the case management has ended because the files have been withdrawn and put, as all of us saw on videotape, in corridors in boxes in some building in Downsview. No one has access to those files, or hasn't had for some time, and the reality is that the improved technology is still years away. This business plan clearly says that MECA, the system that the minister talked about yesterday, is inadequate, as he says, but it also clearly says that nothing is going to be done about that technology until the second or third year of the plan.

These so-called enhanced service people who will be able to make decisions do not have the backup of enhanced technology to help them. They don't have the files in front of them because nobody, I'm sure, with the chaos we all saw in the videotape, can find them, and the reality is that the plan itself cannot function well.

The other issue is, who are these staff? It's very, very interesting when we talk about the staffing of this plan to know that in January 1996 this minister knew there would be chaos. This minister understood entirely that there would be chaos. I'm going to read to you out of the business plan what the personnel issues were. It's very important for us all to understand why they are so important.

On page 11 of the January 18 business plan, let me just read. This follows immediately, incidentally, upon the words, "Ontario is the most 'cost per case' efficient program in Canada." "Proposed staffing impacts." I'm just going to read it to you. This minister says there's no chaos. He knew there would be chaos.

"This business plan will result in net staff reductions of some 160 full-time positions. As a result, the FSP will reduce gross program expenditures by \$4.493 million in fiscal 1996-97 and by a further gross savings of \$3.37 million in fiscal 1997-98. Net savings in each of these fiscal years will be \$2.298 million in 1996-97 and an additional \$1.175 million in 1997-98 once the non-tax blitz initiative" — I'll explain that one to you later — "funding of \$2.195 million per fiscal year is factored in.

"Total full-time program positions following this restructuring, at March 31, 1997, will be 203 (including seconded legal services), down considerably from the current full-time position complement of 364." Understand, this plan was to have that staff complement down to that by March 31, 1997.

"It should be noted," the business plan says, "that employee productivity and morale will be of considerable concern and may create additional obstacles for the program to manage during the transition period."

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't think we have a quorum to continue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Would you check for a quorum, please.

**Acting Clerk Assistant (Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Acting Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** No doubt the employee productivity and morale might have been bad, but the Attorney General found a way around that. It goes on to say:

"Staffing the New FSP Organization: In order that identified savings targets for the 1996-97 fiscal year are met it is imperative that the program be advised immediately of the government's direction concerning this initiative.

"Assuming early government approval (pre-budget date) the FSP plan will issue affected program staff (some 335) effective March 1, 1996, with appropriate layoff notices (to a maximum of six months).

"The FSP seek the assistance of human resources specialists in order to plan, stage and commence the recruitment process for some 170 full-time positions.

"As previously mentioned, our concerns regarding existing employee indiscretions during this transition period, the program will plan for an early summer 1996 start date for these competitions.

"Estimated Labour Adjustment Costs: Labour adjustment costs have been estimated at some \$15 million. This is an extremely high and conservative number which includes payment to all existing program staff (some 335) during a six-month notice of layoff period. The program, due to present resource limitations and time frames, has calculated that each of these 335 staff members will not be successful in competing for any of the positions established by this business initiative, nor will they be assimilated into any other provincial government position. Therefore, this \$15 million" payment "assumes all 335 affected employees will be released from government employment, all having completed an appropriate number

of continuous services whereby they would each receive a six-month severance payment."

We all know that's exactly what happened. It didn't happen on March 1, 1996. No, these people, who saw this in February 1996, who knew the axe was going to fall, heard on August 15, 1996, and they were immediately let go. They were given the full six-month payment and immediately left their jobs.

Was there anything in place to replace them? Of course not. In fact the competitions hadn't even been opened for the new positions at that point, and those competitions only closed three weeks ago. And the minister stands up in this House day after day and says there was nothing wrong with the plan, that in fact it was still having money flowing. Well, who was flowing it? Let's tell you. What did they do? They went to temporary hiring places, to temporary employment agencies, and took people on their books with no expertise in family support to answer phones. Basically they couldn't say anything to people except, "Somebody will get back to you; we can't find your file," or, as we heard in this House on a number of occasions, disparaging comments to people who through court order were entitled to payments: "Why don't you get a job?" or "You got money in August. What's the matter? Did you spend it all?"

**1640**

So dedicated, trained staff, staff whom we as taxpayers had paid to get trained so that they could be the most effective support enforcement staff in the entire country, were thrown on the trash heap by this government, their expertise completely ignored, their loyalty and their efforts on behalf of the people of Ontario completely ignored, and temporary staff were brought on who disparaged the clients of the program or at very best could give them absolutely no information at all.

I can't wait to see the figures for July, August, September, October and November of 1996. It doesn't surprise me, quite frankly, that the last monthly report we have been able to receive is May 1996, because contrary to what the minister says, I know those figures will show a huge drop in the amount of dollars that were collected and paid out during that period of time, and so do the people who should have been recipients of that money.

They know from experience that those dollars didn't flow to them. Their question is, "Where did they go?" because they know those dollars flowed. They know, because they call the employer of their partner and the employer says: "I can't figure out what's happening. I've deducted. I sent it in. I don't know what's happening." In many cases they say: "They've cashed the cheque. We don't know why you're not getting your money." We've brought case after case after case here.

Why would this have happened? Why would a minister and a government take a plan that was working better than any other plan in the entire country, that would have worked very well if the employees had had the tools that this government is allowing for the plan now, and destroy it, destroy it with nothing to take its place, destroy it in a way that really meant only those who were already on automatic deduction, automatic payment plans convenient to the Royal Bank, could get their payments? I'll tell you



why. Is it speculation? I don't know. It would be speculation if I hadn't heard the advice of the Minister of Education. The Minister of Education was very clear: "The way you deal with these issues, my friends," he said, "is to create a crisis, make a situation so bad that everybody sees any change in it as an improvement."

That's what we see here. We see those people who would have stood up, could have stood up and praised this plan and urged the government to keep the regional offices, the ones who were getting full payments, seeing a whittling down of the arrears in their cases, seeing that in a regular way, and what happens to them? They don't get their money, so they become dissatisfied customers of the plan.

Then the minister says: "That's okay. You don't like the plan? Opt out. Lower our caseload. Lower our costs. Opt out." He says to people who might go on the plan in the future: "You don't need to go on the plan. Don't bother. You don't have to go on the plan. Don't register for it."

I don't think this is a paranoid fantasy, friends, because we've seen this government do this again and again and again. The Minister of Education creates a crisis in education by withdrawing dollars, refusing to accept that people want to raise taxes to maintain services. We see the Minister of Health destroying the health system of the province, quarrelling with the doctors, closing hospitals, paying no attention to local communities. We see it again and again with the policies of this government. When you want to get out of a business, what do you do? You convince the population that they don't want that service anyway, and that's exactly what this Attorney General has done with the family support plan, the best support enforcement plan in Canada and frankly, from the information I have, probably across North America.

That's what he's done. He's destroyed any sense that the plan will work. What's more, he knew that was a danger — always assuming he read the business plan — because on page 13 of the business plan there is a note. It's in bold. It's underlined. It's an important note. It says:

"The 35% target reduction" — this is in the budget of the family support plan — "has been recommended to be applied at 15% for 1996-97 and 20% for 1997-98 instead of 20% and 15%, as exceptional costs will be incurred during the first year for reorganization of the business and relocation of staff, premises, furniture, lease costs, leasehold improvements etc. These costs will not occur in the second year." Then, underlined: "Failure to adequately fund the one-time costs in the first year will mean that the program will be unable to recover from the closure of the eight regional offices. Because surplus notices will be given to virtually all service delivery staff early in 1996-97 fiscal, it is imperative that competitions be conducted immediately in order to minimize service disruption and carry on business. The surplus staff will not be motivated or fully committed to service delivery during the notice period. A 20% constraint in the first year will not allow the program to run the competitions to hire service delivery staff."

We know that advice was not followed. We know that those notices weren't given until August 15, 1996, at

which point the staff disappeared. We know that the competitions were not opened immediately. We know that the competitions only closed at or near November 1 and that people had to go through the hiring process at that point and supposedly be trained.

What did the minister tell us? The minister told us we shouldn't worry because — what did he say? Was it Monday he said that one point something million dollars was processed by the plan, the highest amount ever? Well, that's a joke. That's a real joke, because in May 1996, \$44.9 million was processed. These folks were unionized workers who worked in the regional offices, so they worked regular working hours. They weren't on shift work. They didn't work Saturdays. Although many of them did in order to do their job, they weren't paid for it.

How many workdays do we have in a month? We have about 22 on average. Some months it's 21; some months it's 23. I don't know what it was in May 1996, but even I know that when you divide 22 working days into \$44.9 million, you get well over \$2 million a day.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** And that's just to recipients.

**Mrs Boyd:** That's just to recipients. Some \$5.7 million went to the treasury.

When the minister tells us that everything's fine and his plan is working well, it doesn't take much to prove him wrong. It doesn't take much to know that he took a plan and broke it, that people from have had increasing difficulty from August to November getting their money even though they got their money before, that there was nothing put in place to ease the transition period and that what this government did was try to destroy confidence in the plan and thereby encourage people to withdraw from the plan or not to register in the plan. I call that a real shame, because what we will see is a gradual deterioration into the situation that existed 10 years ago after the Conservative governments of those days had neglected their duty on this issue.

What's the other reason? The other big reason this government starts claiming that services don't work is so they have an excuse to privatize. Boy, is that ever the agenda with the family support plan: to privatize the plan. If you look at the sequence of events, it's very clear. On page 14, "In year 2 of this plan, 1997-98, and the following year, after changes are made in program design, FSP will look at options to privatize the delivery arm of the program."

**1650**

We knew that was always a pressure, because we knew how inadequate the technological resources of the ministry were to deal with this plan. It was always the challenge for the Attorney General's ministry to try and figure out how to get the capital dollars to improve the computer system to deliver this program. It's a shame that when the SCOE plan was set up in 1987, in the green years of the province of Ontario when revenues were high, the previous government didn't invest in a system that would have had the capacity to deal with that plan. But they didn't. The system was not adequate, and we inherited that system at the same time that we inherited a worldwide recession and a real inability to meet all the capital costs that had accumulated over the



years of Conservative and Liberal government, particularly in the technological field.

Our government did work very closely, as had the previous government, with the Royal Bank of Canada in terms of delivery mechanisms. And that's true; we did. But our vision was to do that in such a way that the expertise of those who were public servants in the province and who had been trained and become experts in this at our expense continued to be able to deliver that expertise to the people of Ontario.

But what was one of the first actions of this government? To end successor rights for civil servants, a very important part of Bill 26. Although successor rights have been a hard-earned right of all employees over many years, and still exist in the private sector, this government in one fell swoop wiped out successor rights for the public servants it employed. That was very important because now, when you have an example like family support, you see exactly what's going on. When this plan is privatized it will be easier for private corporations, in this case the Royal Bank, to make more and more money at the expense of employees because they won't have to pay employees what they were paid. It makes it easy for the government to get rid of employees and to lower the costs of services by completely ignoring the dedication and the expertise of its staff.

There's no question that that's what to happen. I read again from page 3 of the business plan: "Payment, collection and distribution will be out-sourced to financial institutions, since this is not a core business, and can be done better outside the government. Electronic commerce will replace collection and keying of payments — payment information will be updated electronically — and the production and distribution of cheques to recipients."

It sounds innocuous enough, but what the plan really is is made much clearer as we go on, because the business plan says very clearly that the objective of the government is to develop expertise on this and then sell that expertise to others — sell that expertise; make this a whole new way of dealing with things, a whole new way of selling the expertise that was built up by those employees who have now been lost, the 44% of the staffing of the FSP plan, and it is going to become a business that the government can sell. Quite frankly, what that means is the government is saying it has no obligations at all to use, in the best interests of the people of Ontario, the expertise of the staff we have trained.

Now, on page 10 of the business plan, the full effort of the privatization mechanism is very clear. "With program restructuring," it says on page 9, going on to page 10, "coupled with other business improvement continually evolving, the FSP cannot provide the required and necessary attention to assigned cases without the continuance of the government's financial support. The FSP has demonstrated" — it certainly has — "that it can recover the cost of the entire program twofold and expects to not only sustain this performance but to improve cost recovery to threefold as part of the overall business approach."

That would be easy for them, I would suggest, if they had kept the remaining structure with the tools that are available in Bill 82. It goes on to say:

"Agent revenue: Between the third and fifth years of this business plan, following the first year of program rationalization and stabilization and after the second year of legislative amendments and enhancements, FSP expects the potential for selling off its professional services and/or program expertise to other jurisdictions. Opportunities exist for FSP to provide effective and efficient enforcement services for courts, legal aid, Ministry of Finance, MCSS, municipalities and federal governments, such as revenue, immigration and justice, of which FSP will study further through this five-year plan."

Clearly, what we're looking at is a major issue that makes this a money-collecting agency only, and it sees it not as a specialized collection agency but as something that will do all the collecting for all the plans that report to the Ontario government, and indeed to other governments, in the future.

You may say, "Is that bad?" Not necessarily. When you develop expertise using technology, it's not necessarily bad to use that knowledge and to use that knowledge to support services. What is bad is that of course the personal element gets lost. You can't do that and prove that you're effective if you have on your books a huge amount of uncollected dollars because it's not going to look effective, right?

What you have to do is somehow find a mechanism to get rid of the almost \$1 billion of outstanding enforcement. So what happens? Well, you give the director the opportunity to close files or not to accept files that look as though they might be hard to collect. Indeed, in the transition plan that was announced on August 15, 1996, the ministry, in its own backgrounder — the last line is the giveaway: "In the transition period the director will authorize the closure of files."

Yesterday the minister, standing in his place, said \$450 million of this nearly \$1 billion is not collectible. He's already decided it's not collectible. So what this minister is going to do is give the director the opportunity to close files, get rid of all the files that are expensive and complicated that haven't yet resulted in a payoff and in one fell swoop say, "We have doubled the efficiency of the plan."

It's so transparent that even you must see it. You take \$450 million and say, "We can't collect it, so we're writing it off," and then say, "Look how efficient we are." There's only one problem: That \$450 million doesn't belong to you; it belongs to those recipients who are citizens of the province of Ontario. It's not your right to write it off. What you're doing, quite literally, is taking away the opportunity for those people to ever receive the money that is owed them legitimately under a court order.

You're writing it off because it will make the minister look good; it will make the plan look good. It will make it easier to sell to people when you can say, "We have doubled the efficiency of the plan because we only have \$500 million outstanding." You didn't say: "Let's give them the tools. Let's give them two years to see how much of that \$450 million they can collect with the new tools." Oh, no. Part of the transition period is to lower the number of files and look good on a competitive,



privatized basis in terms of collecting money. Quite frankly, the only people who lose are the people who've been losing all along: the people who haven't had the dollars to which they were entitled. You ought to be ashamed.

1700

Another issue in this sorry business is the part of the bill that enables the director of the family support plan to hand over his or her responsibilities to any agency, board, commission, agent, any individual to carry out. That's the giveaway, isn't it? Because that does not mean what the minister suggested it meant, that in some of these tough cases you can hand it over to a collection agency to collect — that's always been one of the possibilities — but that holus-bolus you can turn this entire operation over to the private sector.

We know that's the plan, and there are real concerns about that. First there's the concern of all those people who answered the competition who are now the new people trying to run the family support plan, these upgraded people, these now management classification people: no kind of protection from the union any more. All those people who in good faith have accepted these jobs, what will happen to them? We don't know, but we do know they have no job protection now. It's fine to say, "We're upgrading them to give them the expertise and the authority they need to do the job." That sounds pretty good to a lot of these folks. What they're giving up in many cases or what is really happening is that you do not have a body of unionized workers who have any kind of protection from a sudden decision to completely divest yourself of this business.

That wouldn't be nearly as frightening if this bill were not giving the government and the director of the plan access to virtually every form of information about individuals, not only in this province but across the country.

One of the things we will be doing when we go to committee on this bill is to seek an opinion from the Information and Privacy Commissioner about the possible dangers around the way this government envisions the sharing of information. What will have to be weighed in the balance is the importance of getting to recipients the dollars they are owed, to which they are entitled under a court order, and the danger of access to information by who knows whom in the future. The director is able to give this information to anybody and is exempted from the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to enforce these orders.

That was not nearly so scary when we knew those would be enforced through a government agency, clearly controlled by government policy, clearly accountable to the government of the day and accountable if information were to stray, but not very comforting when we know that this bill gives the director a chance to assign any and all responsibilities and powers to any other agent, any other agency, any other business, any other corporation. That's a real worry. I think one of the issues we have to look at is what we gain and lose in terms of that information.

It brings me to the other issue: Are we pinning too many hopes on this bill? The good things in this bill are

that the tracking mechanism is there for the plan, that there's going to be an interface with federal government data banks, with other provincial data banks, with all the data banks within this province. That's a good thing, in one way, because it means that some of the tracking issues that have been identified from the very beginning by the family support staff will now not be barriers. That sharing of information is good.

But it is not good if it leads to an invasion of privacy of individuals. I can assure you that there will be those who will challenge this legislation on that ground. Those who are trying to escape payment will do almost anything to evade the kind of enforcement you are proposing. It is extremely important to recognize the lengths to which evaders will go. Usually only the recipients understand that, but soon it will be apparent to all of us because we will see court cases occurring around whether you are violating the constitutional rights of individuals.

I think it is great if it works, that those who shelter their dollars under joint accounts or in joint property or under business partnerships, those who clearly take a small salary out of their business and get all their expenses paid by the business so that it looks as though they have only this much income whereas in fact they are enjoying huge benefits — that's one of the best parts of this. I think that's great.

But I also know that the legal advice our government got about that suggestion was that it was highly challengeable and that if you take the chance of putting this kind of thing into a bill, you'd better expect legal challenges, costly legal challenges, because child support evaders will do anything to avoid payment. Their lawyers will want to test a law that appears to violate the rights of third parties.

What we may be doing here is that we may have destroyed a plan that was working in an increasing, incremental way over many years, and some of the tools that might counter that erosion of the plan may not work. I hope they do. I hope the government's determination in bringing forward this bill means they are determined to protect it in the courts, means they understand this will be a fight: that those who stand to be required, as third parties, to give financial statements are going to fight that very hard, and that those who have agreed to shelter, and there are many out there who have agreed to shelter payors, do not want their own affairs dragged into the public arena — and they will be.

Evaders of child support very often do not want to get involved with the family support plan because they have to give financial statements. Why do they not want to give financial statements? Because then there would be a record of what their financial situation was and it would be possible to balance that against subsequent financial disclosures. Those who are evading various levels of taxes as they run their private businesses or as they are self-employed are very likely not going to want to give a financial statement to a government agency, because they are in the business of evading not only their child support obligations but also, very often, evading their other responsibilities of citizenship, like paying the various taxes and the various employer taxes involved.

What we will see are many challenges here. What we will see is a situation where it is likely, as a result of a challenge, that those parts of the bill might even be suspended and that we will not be able to deliver on the hopes we've raised among the recipients out there in Ontario. That has to be taken into account.

Most of my colleagues intend to speak on this bill; we consider it a very important one. We certainly were surprised to hear the government House leader think that it could be finished on Monday, because we have clearly told him that we are very concerned about this bill, that we are not prepared to have a truncated debate on this because we believe it is a very important principle at stake here, and that the government is trying, under the guise of improving a plan, to cover up the fact that it may have destroyed the very plan it claims to be trying to improve. And we believe very strongly that it is important for the people of Ontario to understand what is included in this bill, what the implications are of each of the various points, and that we understand it is important to us whether we are recipients or payors, because as taxpayers we pay when parents don't.

1710

It is going to be extremely important for all of us, if this bill goes forward, to try to heal the damage caused by the Attorney General in his very clumsy implementation of so-called restructuring, his destruction of the plan as it existed, so the plan will not be further eroded by those who say, "Gosh, they can't guarantee that I'm going to get paid so I'm not going to go into it." That will hurt us all. That will hurt us all and it will particularly hurt children and youth, who are most likely to be the major recipients of support under the plan.

There are many other issues our party wants to raise around the family support plan and I know my colleagues will do that as time goes on. I would just plead with the government that, because there are good things in this act, what we are trying to do is make this work better. We are trying to take out the parts of this act that will not assist the recipients in getting their just dues and to help you make the parts that will do that stronger than ever.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** In response to the member for London Centre, I would like to say that she has given her usual reasoned argument, most of which I disagree with; however, I will congratulate her. Well, I will congratulate her compared to the performance of the Liberal Party yesterday. At least she has put forward some reasonable points. Unfortunately, in the two minutes I have, I'm only able to comment on one. She has talked about a number of issues: the opting-out issue, the ability to close cases, the privatization, several other issues.

She talked as if the system is okay. It's not okay. I know that's a philosophical debate because I've heard members of her party stand up and say that we've caused the problem. Well, there has been a problem with the system for a number of years, and this bill, we believe, will solve many of those problems.

I have a minute to respond to the opting-out issue. I would like further time to debate it, and perhaps as we go

on we will. Clearly, not everyone wants to be in the system.

**Mrs Boyd:** Yes, non-payors don't want to be in the system.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for London Centre, come to order.

**Mr Tilson:** I'm sorry, but there are individuals who simply don't want to be in the system. They don't want government interference.

**Mrs Boyd:** They don't want everyone to know what their tax payable is.

**Mr Tilson:** Well, you can say that. I think that's the philosophical difference we have. Your government, when you were in power, wanted to be all things to all people. That's not necessarily the way to go. We simply can't afford that process. The moneys we can save from not enforcing all those orders that don't need to be enforced we can apply to other situations for the women and children who are having serious problems collecting their resources. That's a genuine philosophical difference, and I can say that we will have time to debate that as we go on.

This isn't an issue of stigmatization. This is an issue that if you wish to get out of the system you can get out of the system, so we can properly enforce those orders that need to be enforced.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Orillia):** For people who are watching, the family support plan is probably something that most people have not had contact with. I can tell you, the phone in my office has been ringing since this minister, under the Harris government, has started to unravel it in the name of restructuring. The unravelling began with the closing of the regional offices and having no plan in place whatever to make sure the transition was smooth.

What this is about is making sure that women and their children — and it is usually women and their children — receive the support payments from their spouses. The reason this plan was put in place was because we found that there was a 75% delinquency rate and that women and children were having to go on welfare because their spouses were not giving the custody support they were supposed to give.

What happened was the previous government scooped everyone in. We knew the plan had problems, but mostly the problems were administrative. It was making sure that people got their cheques on time; it was making sure that the delinquent spouses had them properly garnished and that their moneys were put into the bank. There were growing pains of the plan because the caseload was very large.

But what this minister and this government have neglected to acknowledge, and refuse to acknowledge, is that today the problem is that we are getting the spouses who previously were delinquent phoning in and saying the money was deducted or, better still, "I made the payment. The payment is in. I want my children to have the money I have given them," and it is sitting in the government's bank account. That is a new problem and my concern is that this legislation will not fix that. There are some good things, but it won't fix the —



**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time has expired. Further questions or comments?

**Ms Martel:** I want to commend my colleague the member for London Centre for her comments with respect to this important piece of legislation and I want to reinforce a number of things she said with respect to this bill.

First and foremost, she and I yesterday heard at least three Conservative members say, "The plan is broken, the plan is falling apart, and the only thing that's going to save it is the measures we're putting forward." I'm reminded of two things. Number one, under 42 years of a previous Conservative government, there was not one single effort made to put in place any kind of enforcement agency or enforcement activity to deal with the problems that predominantly women and children —

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Dufferin-Peel, come to order.

**Ms Martel:** — used to have to try and get support — not one effort whatsoever, and you have to live with that.

Second, at the same time as those same members are talking about how the plan is broken, the Attorney General's own business plan, released by him in January of this year, said the following:

"Ontario is the only maintenance enforcement program in Canada which fully offsets the cost of services and provides a similar amount as net return to government. Ontario is the most 'cost per case' efficient program in Canada." The business plan went on to say it was the most effective, best enforcement agency anywhere in the country.

The crisis, my friends, did not happen under the Liberals or the New Democrats; the crisis happened in mid-August when this Attorney General decided to cut 290 staff and close the eight regional offices in order to save 35% from the family support plan to help finance the tax cut. That's when the crisis started.

What's going to happen under this bill is that all those people who have been caught in this crisis are going to say: "I'd better get the heck out of this. I'd better opt out of this plan because it's clear I'm not going to get my payments. I'd better make sure that I try and get something, so I'm going to get out now." That's what has happened. The crisis started under you.

**Mr Ron Johnson (Brantford):** It gives me great pleasure to comment on the remarks from the member for London Centre as well as the member for Sudbury East because, I tell you, she talks about how the crisis has just started, but I know, as an elected representative for Brantford, that when I got elected just over a year ago, one of the first things I was faced with in terms of my constituency office and the complaints was a broken family support plan.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** How happy are they now?

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please, member for Hamilton Centre.

**Mr Ron Johnson:** It was one of the first things I had to contend with in my constituency office, and I would say the reason I was forced to deal with that is because of the inaction of the New Democratic Party when it was

in government. That is the reality behind this issue. That is why we are now coming forward with what I consider to be very progressive legislation that will actually fix the family support plan and go a long way to getting needed money to women and children of Ontario.

I just want to make it very clear that right from day one, when I set up my constituency office, the biggest complaints that I got were from women and children who couldn't get their money through the family support plan. I tell you too that as a result of some of the reforms we're putting in place, we're going to be able to channel those funds much more efficiently and effectively. It's very progressive legislation when you look at the opting-out choices that people now have.

1720

The sort of fearmongering we're getting from the member for London Centre when she talks about how we're somehow destroying a plan that in my opinion is already broken is not unlike the fearmongering the member for London Centre and her colleagues across the way continue to perpetuate on every single issue every time the government comes forward with progressive legislation. I'm proud to support this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for London Centre, you may sum up.

**Mrs Boyd:** I thank the member for Oriole and the member for Sudbury East and say to them very clearly that this is an important issue that we need to keep bringing forward.

To my friends in the government I repeat what I said to you before: The minister himself says that a huge portion of the problem occurs because \$300 million was outstanding the first day that SCOE ever happened, because there was no plan in place. There are long-standing issues that are outstanding, and that is a problem, and those are many of the complaints that we get.

The other problem the family support plan had was that it needed some of these other tools. If the member for Brantford knew the history of the development of this plan he would understand that what you are attempting here — I hope it works. I hope it doesn't fall to court challenge. These are very direct matters that were developed, brought forward by the family support plan and would have been put in place had we been able to get legal assurance that they would be unchallengeable or at least winnable. They are the tools the plan needs. Those tools are needed. The commitment of the federal government, which we see in their plan, is needed to have the kind of enforcement plan that's there.

Those weren't in place in 1987 or 1990. They are in place now, so we are saying that yes, many elements of this bill are progressive and they will help. If they had been put in place without breaking the plan and encouraging people to leave the plan and actually letting people opt out of the plan, you would have seen an enormous improvement. But what you have done is destroyed the plan, destroyed confidence in the plan, and that will destroy the plan itself.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** I am supporting Bill 82 as introduced by the Attorney General. It's a bill in which I've had a great deal of interest and involvement.

Before I get to the details of the bill I want to speak about my active interest in this legislation. Back in the summer of 1995 I received a letter from constituents who had formed a group called Families Against Deadbeats. Their founder was a woman named Renate Diorio and the cofounder was and is her father, Heinz Paul, or Sir Heinz as we now refer to him in my office. He is there on a regular basis with files to try to help the women — and men, incidentally, because there are a few men in this group — try to get their family support payments through the system.

I just want to take this moment, if I may, to wish Heinz well. He is in the hospital today for surgery, and I hope he recovers successfully.

They were also accompanied by a lady named Danielle McIsaac, a paralegal who helped to advise them, and Councillor Gael Miles from the city of Brampton and the region of Peel, who lobbied me and other MPPs and members of the federal House of Commons and other local councillors to try to address some of the problems they were experiencing with the FSP system.

They are now beginning to see the results of their efforts, and I want to help them achieve one of their goals: passing this legislation without delay. FAD are the same people the members have seen visit this Legislature since changes to the family support plan were announced in July this year. Without their input and advice on the numerous issues contained within the bill, our government would not have been able to make these substantive and effective changes to a support plan that was not working very well at all. It was not working for the children, it was not working for the single mothers, and the deadbeat spouses were being allowed to get away with, figuratively, murder.

FAD was able to provide the Attorney General and myself with some of the real-life cases and explain how parents were avoiding, at all costs, any responsibility for the children they had fostered, especially with respect to financial support. I mention this because I know the members of the third-party caucus always like to bring real-life examples to our attention, and that's laudable. Again, as promised in the Common Sense Revolution, we have listened to the people on the front lines and now we have acted.

I also hosted my monthly cable show as recently as last night. Both Heinz and Renate were my guests and we discussed the changes to the former family support plan. We took calls from several viewers, and without a doubt they were strongly in favour of these stronger reinforcement measures. Some people, not knowing the details of the changes, suggested that we include measures that are already included in this legislation. I was pleased to inform them that thanks to groups like FAD, we were able to act on their recommendations. The callers were just as pleased and thankful that a government finally decided to make a real and meaningful change and that these changes are going to be implemented.

Regarding the bill before the House today, the support plan is moving from a broken plan to a new service-oriented operation. It will better meet the needs of the women and children in this province and will also bring in the toughest enforcement measures in North America.

Deadbeat parents must feel the weight of society's condemnation for not meeting their financial obligations to children which they have fathered or mothered.

When we took office it was very clear that the support plan was not working in a way that could properly meet the needs of these women and children. Specifically, with a caseload of about 148,000, growing by about 1,400 cases per month, the system couldn't work efficiently or effectively any longer the way it was. An average of 23% of the plan's cases are in compliance, and therefore these people should be given the option of getting out of the plan in order to reallocate resources to the 77% not in compliance, without losing their ability to opt back into the plan. In other words, if the government and the court system are not needed and the compliance is taking place, let them resolve it between themselves. When default happens, of course the system has to kick right back in.

Eight offices were operating around the province. Only clients in these eight locations had access to counter service. Less than 60 people a day on average went into each office. Most of them showed up only because they couldn't get through the phone lines. The eight offices were never meant or designed to provide over-the-counter service. Furthermore, 70% of the enforcement workload but only half the staff were located in the GTA.

For the first time in nearly a decade, Ontarians have a government that is willing to take the challenge of overhauling the FSP to ensure that women and children receive the money they are legally entitled to and rightfully deserve. The plan's problems are not new. They date back to 1987, when the program began to degenerate under the weight of bureaucratic and inefficient service delivery. The result is unacceptable to women and children and it is unacceptable to this government.

Close to \$1 billion in child support payments is now owed by payors; 78% of the cases were in arrears. This means that three of four families don't get the money they are entitled to. It also means that many single women and their children are forced on to social assistance because they have no other income source. Estimates provided to me by FAD indicate that the Ontario government spends approximately \$300 million per year on social assistance because of defaulters.

1730

*Interjection.*

**Ms Martel:** How many more are hungry now because of your cuts? How many thousands? All to finance the tax cut. What a class act.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Brantford, member for Sudbury East, come to order.

**Mr Spina:** Among the reforms, the government will, first, suspend the driver's licence of those who refuse to meet their family support responsibilities; second, report to credit bureaus the names of defaulting parents, thereby affecting their credit rating but also allowing a trail to be there, visibly present, for tracking purposes. Third, it's important to screen all provincial appointments to agencies, boards and commissions and the judiciary to ensure the province does not appoint people who do not pay their child support. Next, we have asked to seize lottery winnings of more than \$1,000 to pay child support debts.

*Interjection.*



**Mr Spina:** I thank the honourable member from the third party for ordering the water, which I would love to douse on his plans and his forays in the early morning.

Furthermore, we wish to provide better methods to trace and locate defaulting parents. We want to allow orders to be registered as security under the Personal Property Security Act so that when an asset is sold, for example, an automobile or a boat, the collection of the money owed as child support becomes a priority.

Next, we wish to use private collection agencies to collect the outstanding support payments. You don't need highly paid government employees to do private sector collection services for a lower price.

We are seeking improved access to income tax information regarding default payments from the federal government. Ontario needs online access to federal taxes, unemployment insurance and pension information so that we can find defaulting parents and recover the money owed to children.

Centralizing the new Family Responsibility Office in Downsview, where 70% of all the clients are located —

**Ms Martel:** We were there.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Downsview? I went to Downsview.

**Mr Spina:** Well, it's interesting that files get pulled from a box when it's in the process of being moved.

**Mrs Boyd:** Watch it. You're going to get into the same trouble the Attorney General got into.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the member please take his seat just for a moment. Member for London Centre, please come to order. You may continue.

**Mr Spina:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I prefer the warning from you than others.

Finally, we're doubling the amount of front-line staff and investing \$1 million in technologies and retraining to improve direct service to the clients. The rationale behind this is the fact that in the past, telephones were being answered, messages were being taken, but cases were not accessed. As a result of this streamlining change, what is happening is that the case workers will be able to answer the phone calls directly and service the clients on a direct basis.

Despite comments that people are not receiving their cheques, the facts are different. Cheques are being processed within 24 to 36 hours upon receipt when direct-deposit technology is utilized, compared to the two to three weeks it used to take. There are currently two shifts working on cases and processing cheques at a rate of 5,000 daily. A blitzkrieg has been mounted to ensure that the backlog is being taken away. We've tripled the amount of staff answering phone calls.

**Mr Martel:** There's no one working at Downsview.

**Mr Spina:** Yes, member, we have tripled the staff. There are actually people handling calls now, rather than the inefficient, ineffective and impersonal voice-mail-type services created by your government, and 95% of the individual problems that have been discussed publicly have been addressed. It's a matter of implementation. Many of the publicly mentioned cases have historic problems which often cause delays, but until new enforcement measures and legislation are in place, these problems will recur.

It is proven that support orders that are unenforced or uncollected often result in mothers having to go on social assistance in order to support their children. In the end, the taxpayers are picking up the slack for irresponsible parents.

The commendable efforts of groups like FAD will not only benefit women and children and some men, but they benefit all taxpayers, and they benefit them by reducing the burden on the social assistance program. That's what the plan was originally created to try to do, and it slowly began to break down.

Initial calculations by the region of Peel alone indicate that over \$4.3 million per year can be saved in social assistance costs if support orders are enforced. This is on top of the approximately \$300-million cost to the province.

Again I want to congratulate people like Heinz Paul, Renate Diorio, the founders of Families Against Deadbeats, and their paralegal, Danielle McIsaac, who have struggled for years with past governments and members to get these changes implemented. I've been working with FAD and the staff in my office has been working closely with them to try to get the backlog of payments that is existing and that has existed back to these people. We've been excited by the fact that we can recite cases where people who have not received a plug nickel for the last three or four years have gotten as much as \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 and \$60,000 in back payments as a result of the efforts of my office with the people in the ministry.

It has been a real experience. I have seen, not unlike the members of the opposition, women and children in my office with the specific problems, the very same problems, that have been voiced here, but the reality is that we have worked diligently to try to resolve the situation for each of these people. We've tried hard to resolve the situation for all of the people in all of our ridings collectively, I think, as members of this Legislature. We are trying to improve this structure because we are all fighting for the same goal, and that objective is to get the money that is owed to these mothers and to these children, and to go after the fathers or in some cases the mothers who are owing the payments to these families.

I want to close by reading a portion of the petition that was sent to me and other members in Peel region which we have presented on many occasions here in the Legislature. Overall, FAD has sent me petitions containing over 500 signatures so far. They have over 200 active members in their organization and are growing daily. They may be based in Brampton but they have members as far as Niagara-on-the-Lake, eastern Ontario, south-western Ontario, and some from up closer to Sudbury but not quite that far. Maybe they think the members there are doing a sufficient job, so we thank you.

But all of our members, I think, have been contacted by the people in this organization and others, and it's important that we work together to get this bill through to give the system the power to be able to deliver. That's the key thing that we are all collectively trying to accomplish: the delivery of the money that is only justly owed to the children. But beyond that, it's also looking at the parents who have abrogated their responsibilities as



parents, either as fathers or as mothers. We know the majority of them are men who have abandoned totally their responsibility to children they have fathered. That is totally unacceptable in any society, not just ours.

1740

The petition in part reads:

"Whereas the administration and members of Families Against Deadbeats are in total support of Bill 82...

"Whereas the changes will relieve the taxpayers of Ontario and provide proper enforcement required to collect and administer child support payments and orders...

"We support and agree with all of the changes outlined in the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, set forth by the Honourable Charles Harnick...and urge this Legislature to pass this bill into law as soon as possible."

I challenge the members of the opposition parties, if they care as much as they say they do, to pass this bill immediately and stop playing politics with the issue. Let's get back to business in order to ensure that the women and children get the money they deserve, get the money they are entitled to, nail the deadbeat spouses and force them to accept their responsibilities as parents.

I thank you for the opportunity to share this.

**Mr Kormos:** You've got 11 minutes to ad lib.

**Mr Ron Johnson:** Give us more, Joe. Give us more.

**Mr Spina:** I've already done some comments and I would hope that other members of our caucus perhaps would be allowed the opportunity to make statements.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Colle:** Yes, I would like to comment on the speech presented by the member for Brampton North. The member is basically trying to justify Bill 82, and I think there are some points he made that perhaps may be beneficial aspects of Bill 82.

The thing that concerns me, and I don't think the member appreciates it, and the whole problem really is that the minister acted in a very hasty fashion. In other words, he didn't think before he acted. He shouldn't have closed down the eight local offices. He shouldn't have laid off those 300 people as he was going through this major transition.

I think if there had been some forethought in terms of understanding the scope of this undertaking, of dealing with 145,000 cases, the minister wouldn't have acted like a bull in a china shop. The minister would have stopped and thought about the impact on those vulnerable children who are the victims of the deadbeat parents.

That is the main point that the member for Brampton North fails to appreciate, that there are a lot of people who have suffered unnecessarily because the minister and this government have been in such a mad rush to take money out of programs and they've done it without thinking of how they might hurt people. That is what I think the members on this side are trying to say. That's been the real hurt: not thinking before you rush to judgement here.

**Mr Christopherson:** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the remarks of the member for Brampton North. Obviously he's beginning to serve his penance

and, fresh from his sensitivity training, he tried to give off a feeling of caring. But I have to say I had a great deal of trouble with that when he said that one of the first things they did was listen to front-line workers. I kind of doubt that. The first thing they did was fire the front-line workers. So back for remedial sensitivity training, fellow colleague.

Let me also say that it's interesting that this government says, "Don't play politics with this," but this is the first time the bill has been brought back for consideration since it was introduced October 1. If you were all that concerned about the politics of getting it through, why have you waited so long?

It's important for people to understand that we will support this bill. We will ensure that it gets the passage it needs. But there are some issues here that need to be talked about. The fact of the matter is that the Attorney General has caused these immediate problems we've raised. The reason we've been so infuriated day after day is that virtually every example we brought forward had nothing to do with the ongoing historic problems; what it had to do with was the minister's cancelling and shutting down of the regional offices. That's what caused those cheques to stop. When will the backbench Tory members start talking about that and admitting that?

Until this Attorney General takes responsibility for what he has done, we will be on our feet talking about the damage you've done to thousands of women and men and children because you're the one who caused this problem. So when we support the bill, we're going to hold you accountable to the rest.

**Mr Tilson:** I know the member for Brampton North has worked on this issue for some time. He's been working with Families Against Deadbeats, as he indicated in his presentation. Certainly he has been raising the issues or problems of enforcement for some time. He has listed some of the things, of course, that this legislation will do.

The member for London Centre has indicated that her caucus is going to debate and debate this. Quite frankly I don't understand her taking that position, because we have concerns that this bill will solve now. The longer it's debated, the longer it's delayed in passing, the tougher it's going to be to solve some of these problems.

The tightening up of the rules with respect to enforcement, which my colleague the member for Brampton North has referred to, the suspension of drivers' licences, this isn't a new idea. This is used in other provinces: in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Nova Scotia, and very successfully.

The issue with respect to extending income available to seize is one which the member for Brampton North has referred to on several occasions for some time. Vacation payments and lump sum commissions, those types of things should be made accessible to the women and children in this province who in many cases aren't receiving anything.

The whole issue of preventing the sheltering of assets, which other members have referred to, and I think the member for Hamilton Centre referred to it, may or may not have a legal complication. I don't think it will. The setting up of companies with a second spouse to own



assets, those assets should be considered for possible seizure.

The garnishing of up to 50% of joint bank accounts with new spouses, this legislation will allow those sorts of things; the seizure of lottery earnings of over \$1,000 — I don't see how anyone can oppose these types of things. I congratulate the member for Brampton North.

**Mrs Caplan:** The family support plan is about making sure that women and their children, or men and their children as happens in some cases, although usually it is women and their children, get the money from their ex-spouses that they are entitled to, primarily for child support.

The problems: There are two of them. One is that there is a very large delinquency rate. As a traditional pattern about 75% of those who have support-and-custody orders have been delinquent and have not lived up to their obligation. The taxpayer has had to foot the bill in care of those women and children primarily through welfare support and other social services support. Society believes that deadbeats should pay and look after their families.

What I support about this bill are some of the enforcement provisions that I believe are an important next step for the plan to be able to take to recover those dollars. I want to go on to say that I also support the ability, where there has never been a compliance problem or delinquency, for there to be a contracting-out provision.

I'm worried, however, that because of the administrative nightmare that has been created by this government, which has put women and their children in positions where they can't pay their rent and they can't pay their hydro and they don't have money for food, people will flee the plan and we will see women and children suffer because they're in a delinquency situation and back into the old bad habits and patterns before this plan was enacted.

1750

The other concern I have is that because of the administrative nightmare that has been created the provisions of this bill will not solve that administrative nightmare, because this government cut the resources that the family support plan needs to operate —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Response, member for Brampton North.

**Mr Spina:** I am heartened and indeed delighted to hear the comments from the opposition that they are going to be supporting this bill. Rather than focus on the negatives and the mud-slinging, I am pleased that they are articulating. The member for Hamilton Centre and indeed the member for Oriole have stated that they will be supporting this bill because it is important. As I said earlier in my comments, it is important that the objective we collectively want to achieve here will be able to be reached by the implementation of this bill.

**Mr Kormos:** You've got a minute and a half. Start sucking up to Mike Harris now.

**The Speaker:** The member for Welland-Thorold, this is not a conversation.

**Mr Spina:** Thank you, Speaker. The interesting thing is that there are always going to be upheavals in transitions and this is part of what we are going through now. But as I said earlier, we are particularly pleased that we

have been able to obtain payments in arrears, as much as \$60,000 in some cases, to people in my constituency particularly, which was so heartening. There was a woman who was about to lose her family home and we were able to put her back into a normal, comfortable living style once we were able to achieve the arrears. So I thank the opposition —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, member for Brampton North. Further debate?

**Mr Colle:** I'd like to rise and speak to this bill. The consensus I think is that there are some positive aspects to it and there are certainly a number of areas that nobody can possibly — certainly we do not refute are needed. A number of members have mentioned that the suspension of drivers' licences, for instance, for people who have defaulted is a good initiative, and reporting defaulters to credit ratings. Those are positive steps.

I think, though, the real concern that has been expressed on this side of the House is the approach that the government has taken towards this social issue, and it deals with people who are vulnerable. It deals with people who are in stressful situations, who are in unfortunate situations. Really, what this government did just demonstrated in many ways its callousness. Before it arbitrarily closed the regional offices, eight of them across Ontario, and arbitrarily fired about 300 experienced front-line workers, it should have looked at the impact this would have on people who would be caught in the crossfire.

By not doing that, what has happened is that you have people who are already under a great deal of stress put into more of a stressful situation because their whole infrastructure disappeared. Sure, people will say, "The system had to be dramatically adjusted" and so forth, and those adjustments had to be made. But before you undertake such an adjustment you have to at least weigh the human impact of closing the regional offices, of firing front-line experienced staff and then introducing a whole new computer system which, as the minister has said, is not fully operational right now. Subsequently, you've had some real cases of hardship that have been brought to the Legislature, that all our offices have had brought to us, because there has been a severe fallout as a result of the haste this government has shown in undertaking this dramatic change.

This couldn't have happened at a worse time. Many people in this province are suffering from unemployment. As you know, there's 9%-plus unemployment, and some of these people don't have any other source of income. There have been also cuts to other forms of assistance, and user fees have gone up in the province. Ordinary families are under a great deal of stress. It's tough enough trying to raise a family, pay the bills, pay the rent, pay the mortgage when there's two breadwinners, but you can imagine how difficult it is with one.

I don't know whether anybody ever assessed what would happen to that person if they missed that cheque for support for a month or two. I know there have been all kinds of cases brought forward. We should sometimes remind some of the members opposite that real people have been hurt badly by this government's bulldozer approach to the family support program.

I give you the case of Marvin Lachowsky.

"Marvin Lachowsky is the father of three children, paying \$600 a month to the family support plan. Until two months ago the money was being deposited in two instalments a month in his ex-wife's account.

"Then, even though the payment was still being deducted from Lachowsky's paycheque, the deposits stopped for a month. [The mother] said she received a partial payment for September on October 8. On November 1, \$726 came through, but she said she is still owed \$300, money her ex-husband has already paid.

"The delay in payments has cost her plenty. She turned to family and friends for help in feeding her three children. She paid about \$150 in bank charges, lost her overdraft privileges and suffered the headaches of dealing with utility companies and others she owes money to, she said. 'The children are being affected. My credit rating is being affected...[and] they are making interest on my money.'"

This is one example of a mother with three children who is really caught by the dramatic change in the system that almost, as I said, happened overnight. There are people who were, without warning, forced to rely on friends, to rely on support groups, and who were made desperate.

I don't know if the members opposite realize that even though the stock market is doing quite well in Ontario

and corporate profits are doing well, there are a lot of ordinary working people in this province who are having trouble making payments on their homes, making their rent, even going to the grocery store. Where they used to spend \$150 a week on groceries, they are now spending \$100 or \$80. That's because their disposable income has declined. In many cases their wages or their working hours are less. They used to work 40 hours a week. Now their bosses tell them, "I've only got 20 hours for you to work."

I know of one mother who works as a clerk in a No Frills store. She's working for \$6.85 an hour. She has two children. I don't know if you've ever tried feeding a family and raising a family on \$6.85 an hour. These are the types of jobs that are out there.

If you further risk their viability by cutting back on other programs for them and their children, you can see the desperation it puts people in. These are legitimate people. They're not people who are involved with any organizations or have any axe to grind. They are saying times are tough, and that's why again in this government's —

**The Speaker:** The member for Oakwood, it now being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

## ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
125	Contents	1	7	Mrs Johns . . . . . 5203



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD  
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell  
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries  
Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Burlington South / -Sud	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Carleton	<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b> (PC) Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b> (PC) Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	London North / -Nord	<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne</b> (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Don Mills	<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Markham	<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b> (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamaria (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b> (PC) Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Durham West / -Ouest	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet</b> (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	Nepean	Baird, John R. (PC)
Eglinton	<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William</b> (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme	Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nickel Belt	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Nipissing	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.</b> (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Speaker / Président	Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Oriole	Caplan, Elinor (L)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)
Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)	Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)	Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L)
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Ottawa West / -Ouest	Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)	Oxford	Hardeman, Emie (PC)
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Parry Sound	<b>Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.</b> (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	Victoria-Haliburton	<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Waterloo North / -Nord	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b> (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Wellington	Amott, Ted (PC)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Isabel (PC)	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)	Willowdale	<b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles</b> (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
St George-St David	<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Samia	Boushy, Dave (PC)	Windsor-Riverside	Cooke, David S. (ND)
Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
Scarborough-Ellesmere	<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b> (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs	York Mills	Tumbull, David (PC)
		York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ron Johnson  
Marion Boyd, Robert Chiarelli, Sean G. Conway,  
Ed Doyle, Garry J. Guzzo, Tim Hudak,  
Ron Johnson, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston,  
Gerry Martiniuk, John L. Parker, David Ramsay,  
David Tilson, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Alvin Curling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Joseph Cordiano  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Jim Brown,  
Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Joseph Cordiano,  
Alvin Curling, Brenda Elliott, Morley Kells,  
Peter Kormos, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Frank Sheehan,  
Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Ted Chudleigh  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tim Hudak  
Ted Arnott, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown,  
Annamarie Castrilli, Ted Chudleigh,  
Douglas B. Ford, Tim Hudak, Monte Kwinter,  
Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips,  
Gilles Pouliot, Joseph Spina, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Jack Carroll  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bart Maves  
Jack Carroll, Harry Danford, Jim Flaherty,  
Bernard Grandmaître, Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese,  
Bart Maves, Sandra Papatello, Lillian Ross,  
Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona,  
Len Wood, Terence H. Young  
Clerk / Greffière: Lynn Mellor

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo  
Rick Bartolucci, Bruce Crozier, Ed Doyle,  
Douglas B. Ford, Gary Fox, Michael Gravelle,  
Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren,  
Gary L. Leadston, Dan Newman, Peter L. Preston,  
Tony Silipo, Bob Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Ted Arnott  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Hastings  
Ted Arnott, Rick Bartolucci, Dave Boushy, Tony Clement,  
Carl DeFaria, Bill Grimmett, John Hastings, Ron Johnson,  
Frank Miclash, Gilles E. Morin, John R. O'Toole,  
Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John L. Parker  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tom Froese  
Elinor Caplan, Carl DeFaria, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese,  
Doug Galt, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Rosario Marchese, Margaret Marland, John L. Parker,  
R. Gary Stewart, Bill Vankoughnet, Len Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Dalton McGuinty  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mike Colle  
Marcel Beaubien, Dave Boushy, Gary Carr,  
Mike Colle, Bruce Crozier, Brenda Elliott,  
Gary Fox, Steve Gilchrist, John Hastings,  
Gerard Kennedy, Shelley Martel, Dalton McGuinty,  
Gilles Pouliot, Toni Skarica  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Smith  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Dave Boushy, John Hastings,  
Tony Martin, John R. O'Toole, Trevor Pettit,  
Sandra Papatello, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Tony Ruprecht,  
Mario Sergio, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Resources development /  
Développement des ressources**

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Barbara Fisher  
John R. Baird, Jack Carroll, David Christopherson,  
Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Dwight Duncan,  
Barbara Fisher, Steve Gilchrist, Pat Hoy,  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Bart Maves, Bill Murdoch,  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Président: Richard Patten  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Gerretsen  
David S. Cooke, Tom Froese, John Gerretsen,  
Michael Gravelle, Helen Johns, W. Leo Jordan,  
Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Julia Munro,  
Richard Patten, Trevor Pettit, Peter L. Preston,  
Lillian Ross, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

continued from overleaf

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**Supplementary estimates**

Mr David Johnson . . . . . 5262

The Speaker . . . . . 5262

**Visitors**

The Speaker . . . . . 5262, 5270

**Business of the House**

Mr David Johnson . . . . . 5275

**Erratum** . . . . . 5295

**TABLE DES MATIÈRES**

Jeudi 21 novembre 1996

**AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC**

**ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

**Loi de 1996 sur l'Ordre des  
éducatrices et des éducateurs de la  
petite enfance de l'Ontario,**

projet de loi 90, *Mme McLeod*,  
deuxième lecture

Adoptée . . . . . 5259

**Loi de 1996 sur l'amélioration  
de la responsabilisation**

projet de loi 89, *M. Maves*, deuxième  
lecture

M. Bisson . . . . . 5253

Adoptée . . . . . 5259

**PREMIÈRE LECTURE**

**Loi de 1996 sur la protection  
des locataires**

Projet de loi 96, *M. Leach*

Adoptée . . . . . 5278

**DEUXIÈME LECTURE**

**Loi de 1996 sur les obligations  
familiales et l'exécution  
des arriérés d'aliments,**

Projet de loi 82, *M. Harnick*

Débat ajournée . . . . . 5295



# CONTENTS

Thursday 21 November 1996

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

<b>Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators Act, 1996, Bill 90,</b>	
<i>Mrs McLeod</i> , second reading	
Mrs McLeod	5243, 5251
Mr Cooke	5244
Mrs Munro	5245
Mr Bartolucci	5246
Ms Lankin	5247
Mr Ron Johnson	5248
Mrs Pupatello	5250
Mr Laughren	5250
Agreed to	5259

## Accountability Improvement

<b>Act, 1996, Bill 89, Mr Maves</b> , second reading	
Mr Maves	5251, 5259
Mr Sergio	5253
Mr Bisson	5253
Ms Bassett	5255
Mr Jim Brown	5256
Mr Smith	5257
Mr Laughren	5257
Mr Tilson	5258
Mr Bradley	5258
Mr Gerretsen	5258
Agreed to	5259

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Paediatric care</b>	
Mr Sergio	5260
Ms Castrilli	5261
<b>TVOntario</b>	
Mr Laughren	5260
<b>Victims of crime</b>	
Mr Chudleigh	5260
<b>Rent regulation</b>	
Mr Curling	5260
Mr Marchese	5261
<b>Latvian Independence Day</b>	
Mr Parker	5261
<b>Violence against women</b>	
Ms Lankin	5261
<b>Scarborough churches</b>	
Mr Jim Brown	5262

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY

### AND RESPONSES

<b>Victims of crime</b>	
Mr Runciman	5262
Ms Castrilli	5265
Mrs Boyd	5265

## Environmental harmonization accord

Mr Sterling	5263
Mr Bradley	5265
Ms Churley	5265
<b>Rent regulation</b>	
Mr Leach	5263
Mr Curling	5264
Mr Kennedy	5264
Mr Marchese	5265

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Rent regulation</b>	
Mr Gerretsen	5266
Mr Leach	5266, 5267
Mr Marchese	5267
<b>Social assistance for the disabled</b>	
Mr Gerretsen	5266
Mr Eves	5267
<b>Workers' Compensation Board</b>	
Mr Christopherson	5268
Mrs Witmer	5268
<b>Obstetrical care</b>	
Mrs Pupatello	5269
Mr Wilson	5269
<b>Occupational health and safety</b>	
Mr Christopherson	5270
Mrs Witmer	5270
<b>Mining industry</b>	
Mr Hudak	5271
Mr Hodgson	5271
<b>Niagara Escarpment</b>	
Mr Bradley	5271
Mr Sterling	5271
<b>Youth unemployment</b>	
Mr Pouliot	5272
Mr Eves	5272
<b>Market Ontario</b>	
Mr Chudleigh	5272
Mr Saunderson	5272
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Mr Agostino	5273
Mrs Cunningham	5273
<b>Education</b>	
Mr Wildman	5274
Mr Snobelen	5274
<b>Federal-provincial jurisdiction</b>	
Mr Parker	5274
Mrs Cunningham	5274

## PETITIONS

<b>School boards</b>	
Mrs Pupatello	5275
<b>Workers' Compensation Board</b>	
Mr Christopherson	5275
<b>Bear hunting</b>	
Mr Martiniuk	5275
Mr Gerretsen	5277
<b>Occupational health and safety</b>	
Mr Bartolucci	5275
Mr Kormos	5277
Ms Lankin	5277
<b>Labour policy</b>	
Mr Christopherson	5276
<b>Public libraries</b>	
Mr Grimmett	5276
Mr O'Toole	5276
<b>Tenant protection</b>	
Mr Curling	5276
<b>Municipal restructuring</b>	
Mr Silipo	5276
<b>North York Branson Hospital</b>	
Mr Kwinter	5277
<b>Sale of ammunition</b>	
Mr Barrett	5277

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on estimates</b>	
Mr Curling	5278
Report presented	5278

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Tenant Protection Act, 1996</b>	
Bill 96, <i>Mr Leach</i>	
Mr Leach	5278
Agreed to	5278

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996</b>	
Bill 82, <i>Mr Harnick</i>	
Mrs Boyd	5279, 5290
Mr Tilson	5289, 5293
Mrs Caplan	5289, 5293
Ms Martel	5289
Mr Ron Johnson	5290
Mr Spina	5290, 5294
Mr Colle	5293, 5294
Mr Christopherson	5293
Debate adjourned	5295

continued overleaf



No. 127

N° 127

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 25 November 1996

Lundi 25 novembre 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 25 November 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 25 novembre 1996

*The House met at 1333.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### LOIS DUBOIS

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** On Friday I attended a book-launching ceremony. The author of the book does not have world recognition. She's a local Sudburian by the name of Lois Dubois. The name of the book is *Discover the Secret...to Taking Charge of Your Cancer...and Winning!!* Lois is fighting the ravages of cancer. Let me quote from the introduction of her book:

"I am a person who has taken charge of my illness and as a result, have lived a fuller life than I would have thought possible. If this book succeeds in helping one person, I will have reached my purpose in writing it. If it helps more, the benefits will, I hope, produce a chain reaction that will encourage a few more. Only then will a mass of sick patients become people who, in spite of their illness, have other aspects of their life that will help them get through each of life's challenges. There is definitely a difference between being a sick person and being a person with a sickness."

Lois's inspirational book, her poems, thoughts and words of experience, is sure to help others who have found and find themselves in similar circumstances. Although Lois isn't world-renowned, we think the world of her. Good luck to Lois Dubois, Diane Jacques, Terry Fera and all those who battle against cancer. We can and we must, we must, win this war.

### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I want to return to the continuing crisis at the family support plan. In mid-August of this year the Attorney General laid off 290 experienced plan staff and closed the regional offices. He did this for purely political, partisan reasons; namely to help finance the tax cut. The operating costs of the family support plan will be reduced by 35% over the next two years and there will be 40% fewer staff to try and run the office. As a direct result of the decision to finance the tax cut on the backs of these women and children, families who used to receive regular support payments are now not.

To date in my constituency office we have received over 104 cases since the minister announced his cuts. As of Friday last, we have 39 cases which remain open because we cannot get a response back from the family support plan with respect to our inquiries. We fax our

cases daily directly to the family support plan, except when the fax lines are jammed, which they have been for more than 24 hours on more than one occasion. The overwhelming majority of our cases are women and children who used to receive regular support payments, whose payors have already had their cheques deducted and whose employers have remitted money to the plan. But once that money is remitted, it goes into a black hole.

Last week we finally had to raise the case publicly of Diane, whose case we faxed twice marked "Urgent." In 15 minutes we got a call back, and she got money two days later. That's not the way we should be operating —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

### CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** One of the saddest things that can happen to a family and a community happened in Huron county this weekend. Six of our most prominent young citizens were in a car when the car collided and tipped upside down. Three of our youths were killed. Brian Hill, Pam King and Neal Atchison are dead. Three others are in serious condition at University Hospital.

I was asked prior to this to talk about CPR so that I might gain awareness and education for CPR, which is cardiopulmonary resuscitation. It is a basic life-supporting mechanism. I believe that when the car was found on Saturday night, some of the youths who first came to them helped with CPR.

The ABCs of CPR are to open the airways, allowing the air to reach the lungs; they must start breathing by supplying an air exchange from oxygen in the air to supply the blood; and they must cause circulation — the blood flow must be sufficient to carry the oxygen to the tissues.

Everyone should be trained in CPR. As a result of this, the government of Ontario announced that funding would be available to install defibrillators in ambulances across the province. They have in fact been installed in Huron county. As of October 10, these life-saving devices were available in ambulances across Huron county and other regions of the province.

My condolences to the families.

### HIGHWAY INSPECTORS

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** The Minister of Transportation has just fired 600 inspectors whose job it was to police construction safety for our highways. By getting rid of 600 inspectors, who will ensure highways are built to standard? Who will inspect the work of private contractors to ensure they are not cutting corners and



doing substandard work on highway construction and repairs?

It seems the Minister of Transportation is about to put the foxes in charge of the henhouse. Yes, he's going to let the private contractors set their own standards and inspect their own work. The private contractors are laughing all the way to the bank, and the Ontario taxpayer will be victimized with substandard highways and additional bills from these same contractors for repair work when the roads fall apart.

The firing of 600 inspectors coupled with the dumping of 1,700 kilometres of highways on to local municipalities will mean the end of our uniform road system in Ontario. With no inspectors to ensure standards are met, the provincial government has abdicated a fundamental responsibility to the taxpayers, who will receive less value for their tax dollar in highways that are more hazardous. It is clear the minister is more interested in making the highway construction firms happy. Today he has made them very happy at the expense of the road users and taxpayers of Ontario.

#### SKIING IN SAULT STE MARIE

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** Yes, we have snow. Anybody who watched the Grey Cup yesterday will know that it's snowing all over Ontario. But even more importantly, it's snowing in Sault Ste Marie and Algoma.

The Mountains of the Midwest, the best skiing this side of the Rockies, will be open this weekend and we're inviting everybody to come on over, come on down, come on up and ski in Sault Ste Marie, ski the Mountains of the Midwest just north of our city. Bring the whole family. We have tubing, we have skating, we have cross-country skiing and, yes, we have the best of accommodations.

While you're there, take advantage of the wonderful hospitality of the people of Sault Ste Marie and Algoma, and visit with us. We have all kinds of things that you can see, not the least among them the bushplane museum.

When I left Sault Ste Marie this morning, it was snowing. They've been making snow on the hill for the last two weeks. It's nice and powdery, the best snow you'll find anywhere. So if you're getting into the winter spirit after watching the Grey Cup yesterday in Hamilton, take the time to call ahead and come on up to Sault Ste Marie this weekend and ski at the Mountains of the Midwest in Searchmont.

1340

#### LINDSAY BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I am honoured to present this statement on behalf of the member for Victoria-Haliburton. The Lindsay Boys and Girls Club believes every kid has potential, a statement that my colleague from Victoria-Haliburton believes in, as I do.

In 1992, the Boys and Girls Club of Ontario started a scholarship program. From an initial \$4,000 and four awards, the program has grown to over \$40,000 and 41 awards being given out in 1996. On November 10, Tracey Medina and David Stubbs from the Lindsay Boys

and Girls Club were recognized by their corporate sponsor as recipients of this fine scholarship.

As a club volunteer, Tracey helped in children's programs and organized special events and field trips, serves as the editor of the club's paper, and some day would like to work with socially and emotionally disabled children. David is currently the chairperson of the club's youth council and very active in the day care and junior drop-in program. Some day he also wishes to pursue a career with the Boys and Girls Club.

On behalf of my friend Chris Hodgson, MPP for Victoria-Haliburton, let me congratulate both of these individuals. He is proud and honoured to have two such distinguished constituents working so hard to make their community a better place.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** Last Thursday during private members' hour we had two bills that were being forwarded, and both were passed. One concerned the Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators and its development. That was passed unanimously by this House. But when our House had the choice to send this bill to committee, what it did was to send it to committee of the whole House. For those of us at home, we realize this is sending it into orbit, so it likely will never come down and will never become part of law and part of legislation here. This group in this House did the purely and crassly political thing of not supporting it.

May I tell you, Mr Speaker, that this Thursday, we as members of the House on all sides have the opportunity to pass another private member's bill, that of our colleague Pat Hoy, who is bringing in legislation regarding safety on school buses. The most notable thing about this is that it will double the fines for those cars that choose to just zoom by stopped school buses when their lights are flashing.

Every day in Ontario more than 810,000 children ride 16,000 school buses. It's incumbent on us to ensure the safety of the children in Ontario. May I tell you that we don't want this House to do the purely crassly political thing. We want this bill sent to a standing committee so we can make sure it does become law, because they are all our children.

#### EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** This morning I attended a press conference which brought together a number of community groups sponsored mainly by the Alliance for Employment Equity. They are challenging the constitutional validity of Bill 8, the so-called Job Quotas Repeal Act, on the grounds that it violates the right to equality as guaranteed under section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It's based on a number of myths that have been perpetuated by this government.

Myth 1: The so-called disadvantaged groups are treated equally. If they have the qualifications, they will get the job. Fact: Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, members of racial minorities and women have continued

to face disadvantages which are largely generated by forces of discrimination.

Myth number 2: The Employment Equity Act is a quota system. Fact: The Ontario Employment Equity Act did not require quotas.

Myth: The Employment Equity Act is inconsistent with merit. Fact: The Ontario Employment Equity Act is consistent with merit.

Myth: The Employment Equity Act has been replaced by an equal opportunity plan. Fact: The current provincial government repealed the Employment Equity Act but it has been replaced with nothing.

There are a number of myths around which I have no time to elaborate, but I want to invite those who are watching today that this issue is going to court tomorrow. Bring yourself and a friend to the Ontario Court, 361 University Avenue, 10 am, Tuesday, November 26, and give your support to that group.

#### UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** Once again it gives me great pleasure to inform this House of the tremendous accomplishments being made by Ontario's universities. Today I would like to congratulate the faculty, staff, students and administration at the University of Toronto for being recognized for the third year in a row as the best university in Canada by Maclean's magazine.

President Rob Prichard attributed the success to their students, faculty and private donors. The generous assistance of private donors enabled the university to contribute a greater percentage of its operating budget to student aid than any other university in the country. This level of commitment ensures that no qualified student will be turned away from U of T because of financial need.

For six years, the Maclean's rankings have raised the level of competition among our universities. It is this kind of scrutiny which will push them to improve upon their already high levels of achievement in the future.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the University of Toronto for its continuing success and encourage Ontario's other universities to do their best to unseat them next year.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### DEVELOPMENT CHARGES

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** In the Common Sense Revolution we promised to get rid of the barriers to job creation, investment and economic growth. I am pleased to tell the members of this House that later today we will be introducing legislation that helps us to meet those goals.

The new 1996 Development Charges Act will ensure that these charges will no longer be a barrier to economic growth, to jobs and to new development in this province. The new act will create new jobs in the construction industry and it will help to make homes —

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Oh boy, I can see these cheques being —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I can't hear the member. The member for Cochrane South, heckling is out of order, and it's particularly out of order in the aisle.

**Hon Mr Leach:** The new act will create new jobs in the construction industry and it will help to make homes more affordable for the average Ontario family.

Exactly one year ago we began the fundamental review of the existing Development Charges Act. When that act was passed in 1989, it was supposed to bring consistency and accountability to the way local governments pay for new infrastructure. Development charges help to pay for roads, water and sewer systems, for recreation centres, for parks and libraries, and for cultural centres and administrative buildings, all the things that municipalities thought were necessary for new families and new businesses to thrive and grow and prosper.

In the seven years since the act was passed, there's been a growing concern that the system just isn't working the way it was supposed to. In some municipalities, development charges have become so excessive they have turned into barriers — barriers to economic growth, to home ownership, to new jobs in construction and to the competitiveness of Ontario businesses. Let me give you just one example. Development charges can account for as much as \$20,000 on a \$160,000 home, and that's 12% of the cost. That wouldn't be all that bad if that charge reflected the actual cost of bringing services to that new home.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** It's sure pay-back. That's what the Tories are all about.

**Hon Mr Leach:** But there's a growing sense today that development charges are too high. Some things shouldn't be paid for just by new residents alone, by young families buying their first new home — the member opposite would like that to happen — or by businesses that are trying to expand and grow. It's hard enough for most people to try and pay for a new home without being asked to kick in for a new museum at the same time and then pay property taxes for all the services already in the community.

1350

High development charges have made new homes unaffordable for the average family in Ontario. They have contributed to the high cost of new rental housing. But that doesn't mean development charges aren't needed. They are needed. Development brings in new residents and new businesses to municipalities, and those people expect certain services. More people bring more pressure on services like roads, sewers and water, libraries and recreation centres. It makes sense to have new development pay for some of these growth-related costs, but newcomers shouldn't be expected to pay for gold-plated services.

We will make some critical changes to the act that address the needs of developers and new home buyers, that meet the needs of municipalities.

To address the question of what doesn't have to be built now we will reduce the scope of eligible services.



Development charges will no longer be imposed for facilities like a new city hall, museums, theatres or tourism facilities. Instead, these will be paid for by general tax revenue.

To control the standards by which facilities are built we will increase municipal accountability and responsibility. In the future, municipalities will contribute 10% of the cost of services like new roads and water and sewer systems from general revenues and 30% of the cost of services like new libraries and community centres. They will be asked to think about the benefits and burdens of building that will affect the whole community and they'll have to think about long-term costs and long-term responsibilities before they target new facilities and new services for development charges.

Municipal councillors will have to look at what they already have in their communities and make that existing capacity part of their calculation for development charges for new services. They'll be asked to base their charges on the actual benefits of these new facilities to their new residents and businesses instead of letting new developments and newcomers bear the full cost. We will also require local councils to do a background study of the long-term operating costs of any services being considered for development charges.

This new act isn't just about new homes. It's also about industrial growth. Last week we read about a developer who had to pay over \$200,000 in development charges to put up 100,000 square feet of industrial space. With this new act we will be exempting from development charges the first 50% of expanded floor space in any new industrial expansion.

During the last year we've talked about these issues with municipal leaders and we've talked to the people from the development industry. I believe we've come up with a workable balance. The new Development Charges Act will give municipalities what they need to support new growth. It will meet the needs of the development industry, but most of all this new act will serve the needs of the people of Ontario. The legislation we're introducing today will go a long way towards funding growth in a way that's fair and equitable to everyone. This new legislation promises to make new homes more affordable, create jobs and growth in the construction industry and stimulate the overall economy of this province.

**The Speaker:** Responses.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** We're in the Christmas season. You've certainly given a great big gift to the developers of this province, Minister. I wish David Crombie was in the House today, because normally when the government makes a good-news announcement they're here. Why isn't he here? Because you've gone exactly 180 degrees in the direction Mr Crombie doesn't want you to go.

Let's see what Mr Crombie of your famous Who Does What panel says about this: "Development charges are a critical and essential municipal revenue source for financing growth-related capital infrastructure. Any amendments to the act to reduce the scope or permitted level of development charges will mean higher municipal taxes or user fees." That's what this is really all about and you know it.

Mr Crombie also goes on to say, and this is the irony of the whole situation: "It is also noted that the permissive nature of the act does not obligate municipalities to impose a development charge. For these reasons, the subpanel strongly recommends that municipalities should continue to decide on the level of development charges in accordance with the act."

Let me just ask you one thing. You are the minister who went to AMO these past couple of years and said: "We want to start a new partnership with the municipalities of Ontario. We want to be equal partners in the development of this province." Well, it sure doesn't sound like much of an equal partnership to me if in effect you are making that many new regulations to what is essentially a permissive act to start off with. You don't trust the municipalities, and that's why you're bringing this act forward at this time.

You are the person who said, and I'll just quote to you from last year's AMO's conference: "You won't have to wait for the province to legislate every time you want to do something new. This will give you flexibility to deal with a rapidly changing world, new developments and things you haven't even envisioned yet. Municipal authority to tax and make laws will be broadened," broad governmental powers to do those things without spelling out every little thing in minute detail.

That is exactly what you're doing in this act. You are going to tell municipalities what they can or cannot charge for. If you really believed in the autonomy of local government, you would simply allow municipalities to work with the developers and let them make their own arrangements and their own deals. We all know, however, you don't believe this.

The other thing that is kind of interesting about this is that you're the great believer in the Crombie commission and yet here you are cherry-picking: one idea that's a good one, and another one, such as this one, which you are not only totally renouncing but where you are going exactly 180 degrees in the opposite direction. It just doesn't make any sense at all. As a wise individual in this House said not too long ago, "A tax is a tax is a tax."

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** Who said that?

**Mr Gerretsen:** We could quote Hansard for that. Both the Premier and the now Speaker used to say that.

Here we are talking about increased taxation. We're talking about the property taxes of our province going up unduly. That's really what everything is all about. Whether we're talking about your general tax cut or the tax scheme of a 30% cut for most individuals who are making \$100,000 or more or whether we're talking about the new user fees, a tax is a tax is a tax.

You have done this for one reason and one reason only, and that is in order to give something back to the developers of this province. The development industry must be very grateful for what you're doing for them.

You are ignoring Crombie, the committee that you set up yourself. You are not giving the municipalities the kind of flexibility that you said you would give them, that you told them you would give them in Bill 26, that you've been talking to them about over the last two AMO conferences you've attended.



Basically, Minister, I want you to come clean. I want you to tell the municipalities of Ontario: "We don't trust your decision-making powers. We'd love to download everything on you and we're going to download everything on you. We're not going to give you any more grants and subsidies." Tell the municipalities in this province that you're not going to give them any more subsidies or grants in the next couple of years because basically you don't believe in municipal government; you basically believe that everything should be regulated from above.

This is shameful legislation. You didn't listen to AMO. Where's AMO today? Are they sitting in the galleries? No, because they don't believe in it. Where's Mayor McCallion? Where is she? She doesn't believe in it either. Mr Minister, withdraw this —

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** This government is travelling at illegal speeds day in and day out. They're introducing one bill after the other, giving very little time to the opposition parties to reflect and respond and giving very little time to communities to reflect on the daily changes that this government is introducing, causing a great deal of confusion, in my mind, that I don't believe is good for this government or good for the people of Ontario.

What this government is introducing today seems reasonable at first blush, although we haven't seen the bill and it was hastily called and we went and we got that briefing very, very quickly, again at illegal speeds. But we have a response here today and the response is the following: Yes, some of these charges are going to now be picked up by the municipalities. Some municipalities will pick up 10% of the cost for certain things and 30% of the cost for other things. Who do you think is going to pick up that cost for all these new services? It's the taxpayer of Ontario, through the municipalities the taxpayer funds. This government has stopped funding municipalities for the last couple of years. In the two years this government has been in power it has cut municipal funding by 43%. When they say municipalities will have to pick up the cost for new services, who is going to pay for that? When they say "municipalities," they mean the taxpayer. That's what wrong with this balanced approach this government has introduced today.

1400

They also have introduced something else: the mandatory exemption of industrial expansion for the first 50% of increase of the floor area. That's a tax break. That's a giveaway to their wealthy friends. As if the income tax cut was not enough for their wealthy friends, they've brought something in today that's going to assist them further to have a tax break.

Who do you think is going to pay for that expansion? When services are needed, it's not the big industrial sector that's going to pay for it; it's going to be the taxpayers and they're going to be paying for it through the cost of funding municipalities, naturally. It's the taxpayers who are going to be footing the bill, as the private sector is going to have, yet again, an early Christmas gift, although from this government they're on holiday it seems for every day of the year.

We've had a number of things in the past that have been done by various people. In a report done for the Golden task force, Pamela Blais estimates that urban sprawl costs the GTA taxpayers \$1 billion a year. That in my view is something the government should have done in terms of implementing a report that deals very clearly with where we're wasting the money — \$1 billion in urban sprawl. If it wants to do something about the cost of new development, it should repeal Bill 20, its urban sprawl legislation, and bring back a system that will promote more compact development. We would have had in my view greater savings had we done that than by doing what this government is doing. We are not going to be saving any money. The private sector is going to save a great deal of money, the industrial sector is going to save a lot of money, but the taxpayer is going to foot the bill.

If this industrial sector is expanding its operation beyond the 50% point, that industrial sector is going to be taxed that extra 5% or 10%, because the first 50% is exempt. That in my view is a tax break for the wealthy. The minister says they need that to be able to expand further and to create more work. What this will do is to give a tax break to the wealthy and will allow urban sprawl to continue, something that we attack as environmentally not very good, I argue, and something that will be very costly economically, socially and environmentally for the whole province.

I think this minister should reflect very carefully on what he has introduced today, as we will once we get this bill, and we're going to let the people of Ontario know that user fees are coming and that municipalities are going to have to spend more money because of what this government is doing as they get less and less from the government to do what is needed.

## ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Standing order 62(a) provides that "the standing committee on estimates shall present one report with respect to all the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 59 and 61 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year."

The House not having received a report from the standing committee on estimates for certain ministries and offices on Thursday, November 21, 1996, as required by the standing orders of this House, pursuant to standing order 62(b) the estimates and supplementary estimates before the committee, of the Ministry of Education and Training, the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Office of Francophone Affairs are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** Could you explain that, please?

**The Speaker:** No, I couldn't.



## CASE REPORT, OMBUDSMAN

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the Ombudsman's case report in the matter of Ms C and the Ministry of Community and Social Services, pursuant to subsection 21(4) of the Ombudsman Act.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the opposition members' gallery today Mr Michael Farnworth, member of the Legislative Assembly for Port Coquitlam from the province of British Columbia. Welcome.

Further, we also have in the Speaker's gallery today the Information and Privacy Commissioner for the province of British Columbia, Mr David H. Flaherty, who happens to also be the brother of the learned colleague from Durham Centre. Welcome.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South):** My question is for the Minister of Education. I want to raise with him the issue of the ads he placed in papers during the course of the weekend. I've got a copy of one here placed in the Toronto Star on Saturday. It takes up almost the entire page. It must have cost a lot of money.

Minister, my question for you today is a very simple one: How could you spend hundreds of thousands of dollars, money that should have gone directly into the classroom, on full-page, feel good but say nothing ads? How could you waste this money that should have been spent in Ontario classrooms?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I want to thank the honourable member opposite for the question. I think, from the response that we have been getting over the course of the last day or so, that the public I have talked to across the province is very happy to hear a message: that Ontario is returning to some really clear, high standards for student achievement in our school system.

I believe that message is being well received across this province and I believe it's this government's obligation, and in fact we're fulfilling on that obligation, to inform the public of the direction in which we are taking education, a direction that emphasizes those standards of achievement that are critically important for the future of our students.

I think this ad contrasts very well with ads that have been taken by previous governments that were merely political dogma. This ad is there to inform the public. If you'll notice, sir — you may not have taken time to notice — it does not even include the minister's name unlike other political documents released by other parties.

**Mr McGuinty:** The minister I guess, as expected, is putting his own particular spin on it, but everybody who knows anything about anything knows that this is pure

self-serving, old-fashioned politics and it's as simple as that.

We tried to find out exactly how many tax dollars were diverted from the classroom to pay for John Snobelen's self-serving ads, but his officials refuse to return our calls. Minister, I can understand why you would want to hide that figure. If I were you, I would be embarrassed. If I were you, I would be ashamed to know that I wasted somewhere between a quarter and half a million dollars on self-serving newspaper ads when at the very same time I was preparing to cut hundreds of millions more from schools.

Minister, given your past lectures to school boards on spending dollars outside the classroom, how can you possibly justify blowing a quarter to half a million dollars on newspaper ads? That money could have paid for one heck of a lot of textbooks, supplies and other educational materials. How could you do it?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** The honourable member opposite is wrong, wrong on several fronts. Let me say first that our costs of these newspaper ads are about \$135,000, which I think is a very minimal amount to spend to inform the public of these new, clear, high standards for achievement in our school system.

Perhaps the member opposite thinks it's bad news that we believe that by the end of grade 1 students should be able to read public signs and read simple story books. Perhaps the member opposite thinks that's not a message that the public of Ontario and the parents of Ontario need to hear. I think it is.

**Mr McGuinty:** That's \$135,000 that should have been spent inside the classroom. To make matters worse, it's not the job of this minister to advertise that kind of stuff. We have people in the province who report on these kinds of things: the media. In fact, I've got a copy here of the Sunday Toronto Star, and it's extremely straight up. It says, "Snobelen's 'Rigorous' School Curriculum," and it points out in a very simple and understandable way everything the minister's trying to do. You know what he paid for that? Not a cent. You didn't need to spend a dime on these things. The fact of the matter is, you're not announcing anything new anyway. Free of charge, the newspapers had already covered your announcement, and those stories had more detailed information than your self-serving ads.

Minister, given your actions this weekend, given your decision to waste at least \$135,000 on self-serving newspaper ads, will you admit that you were wrong, that you made a mistake? Will you admit that this blatant waste of educational dollars was the wrong message you wanted to send to students and their parents, who were astonished to learn that you had money for ads at the same time that you were making education cuts?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I want to say to the member opposite that I am proud of this announcement. I am proud to share these high standards with the public of Ontario. I'm proud that our work here to inform the public of what's going on in education is not a political message and it doesn't even contain the minister's name, directly opposed to what your government did in the past, sir. I'm very proud that in the announcement, if you had read it, sir, you would have found that this ministry is



inviting the public to hold it to account. We intend to have a report on what the ministry's doing twice a year. I think that's public accountability and I think it's commendable.

1410

#### ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South):** My second question is for the Minister of Correctional Services. In this weekend's paper I read about one of the jails to be closed by you, the Ontario Correctional Institute. Let me tell you about the OCI. It's lauded by experts internationally as one of the best-developed treatment centres in the world. Why? Because this centre treats inmates rather than just warehouse them. What that means for us is that when these people get out of jail, they're far less likely to be a danger to the public.

Minister, I'd like to ask you today, given their impressive record of rehabilitating prisoners, why are you closing the Ontario Correctional Institute?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I've indicated on a number of occasions that the per diem cost for incarceration in this province is the highest of any provincial jurisdiction in the country, an average of about \$124 per day. We recognize the good work the institute does; in fact, we are going to be enhancing that through the infrastructure changes I have announced. We're going to have a new focus with respect to education and social programming; it's going to be done in other institutions indeed. Again, it ties in very effectively with this government's efforts with respect to doing more for less in terms of taxpayers' dollars. We're very optimistic about the results we can achieve with the program we've announced.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, if something ain't broke, you're not supposed to fix it. This isn't a question of saving money; it's a question of public safety. Every one of these prisoners will be back among the public within two years' time. If they don't receive proper rehab, many will be released only to wreak havoc once again. Let me tell you about the OCI. According to one study, 35% of sex offenders from the institute commit no new crimes, compared with 80% of offenders from other jails who have received no treatment.

I want you to tell me how it is that your decisions to cut the cost of keeping prisoners, to close OCI and build prisons with no teachers and fewer councillors won't lead to more crime. Tell us how that's going to work.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** In fact, we do think it will work. Our answers are not comparable to Liberal answers, certainly, which during their tenure in office was to throw money at everything and double the spending of this province.

The fact is that through the program we've announced there's going to be a 33% increase in educational staff, a 20% increase in life skills and social program staff under the new infrastructure program. The reality is that provincial inmates are incarcerated for an average of 70 days, not a long time for formal education, and we are going to focus on the education building blocks —

literacy and numeracy — which will aid offenders when they return to the community.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, you're not going to be able to replicate what's going on at OCI elsewhere. There's something very good taking place there. It's exemplary, it's recognized internationally, and we ought to be supporting it, not shutting it down.

You're talking about saving money, as usual. You're going to replace the OCI with so-called superjails. You're going to fire 1,400 jail guards and you're going to replace them with video cameras. Your plans to simply warehouse prisoners, all of whom will be back on the streets in less than two years' time, are going to cause more crime. We can't afford your savings.

Furthermore, how can you ignore a study that estimates \$1.2 million can be saved in jail costs for every 100 inmates who go to the OCI because they reoffend at lower rates? Are you willing to tolerate more crime just to save money? Even at that, it's only money on a short-term basis.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I'm not sure where this member gets his expertise with respect to corrections and the recidivism rates, but the fact is that under the program we've announced there's going to be a wider distribution of treatment and programming for inmates right across the system. We're trying to do a much more effective job than has been the case in the past. We recognize the efforts of the institute, but we're going to broaden those opportunities for inmates right across the system. We intend, at the end of the day, to have results that are much improved with respect to people returning to the system and costing the taxpayers additional dollars.

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Solicitor General as well. It concerns the events at Ipperwash Provincial Park. Too many questions remain unanswered regarding the sequence of events that led to the shooting of Dudley George at Ipperwash Park last September.

The Solicitor General denies political involvement, but the evidence of political involvement grows every day. Copies of the OPP logs have now become public. The police logs describe the political interference at Ipperwash. For example, the police logs show that on the night Dudley George was killed, Marcel Beaubien was at the command post for quite a long time. The log records show that Marcel Beaubien advised that he had sent a fax to the Premier advising the Premier of his intentions and that he wanted a phone call regarding his intentions.

Minister, you've always said there was no direct involvement, but your own police logs show there was. When are you going to call a public inquiry to finally get at the facts and the truth about Ipperwash?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I've indicated on a number of occasions that there are criminal proceedings under way; a number of civil actions have been initiated; there is a possibility of an inquest following the completion of these various other undertakings. I don't think anyone on the government side has ruled out the possibil-



ity of a public inquiry following the completion of all those matters.

**Mr Hampton:** We're not talking about an inquest here; we're talking about a public inquiry to get to the bottom of the government's story, which keeps changing. The Premier says he had no knowledge of anything other than what was in the newspaper, but we see from the police logs that there was direct contact with the Premier's office. The Solicitor General says he has no knowledge, but it's very clear from the police logs, which were reported on the weekend, that there was knowledge back and forth, there was discussion back and forth, there was information being shared back and forth.

It's a simple request, Minister. You have changed your story time and again in this Legislature on what happened at Ipperwash. It's time now to have a public inquiry to get to the bottom of this, to find out why someone died on September 6, 1995, and to find out about who was involved in it. Will you have that public inquiry?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I think it's premature to conclude that the answers won't be provided following the completion of the criminal proceedings, the civil actions and, as I indicated, the possibility of an inquest. I don't think it would be responsible for anyone on this side of the House to commit to an inquiry at this stage in the process, until all of those proceedings have been completed.

1420

**Mr Hampton:** This is not about those proceedings. We had the Premier in this House say that he would make available the faxes and the information that came from Mr Beaubien to the Premier's office. We've had the Solicitor General stand in this Legislature and say that he would make available, that he's not trying to hide anything. That all took place more than a couple of weeks ago, yet the government has produced nothing. In fact the Premier now says, "This might be subject to some information restrictions."

That's what we're asking for here. We want a public inquiry to clear up what happened between the Premier's office and Mr Beaubien and what happened between the Solicitor General's office and Mr Beaubien when Mr Beaubien was at the police command post the night Dudley George was murdered. That's what we want to know. We've heard from the police. We want to know what took place between your office and the Premier's office and Mr Beaubien, and you have not been forthcoming on any of that information. You have not provided those faxes, you have not responded to any of the questions in this House. We want a public inquiry to finally get to the bottom of your involvement and the Premier's involvement. Let's have the public inquiry.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The member says I have not been forthcoming. He posed the question, I think about two weeks ago, with respect to faxes. My staff have reviewed the inquiry that he put forward and I'm informed that the ministry log records one piece of correspondence in September 1995 from Mr Beaubien expressing concerns that taxpayers pay for police training. We have no further documents from Mr Beaubien at that time. The only other contact that I'm aware of with my office were calls re my travel arrangements for September 12 to meet with the residents in his community to hear public safety concerns.

## LABOUR RELATIONS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My second question is to the Minister of Labour. We'll get back to Ipperwash again because it's not going to go away. My question to the minister is this. You passed your legislation which now allows scabs to be used in workplaces across this province. I want to remind you of what's happening out there.

In Ottawa we have some of the most vulnerable people in society, the people who are cared for by the Ottawa Valley Autistic Homes and the Ottawa-Carleton Lifeskills authority. They are now using scabs. They are now saying to the dedicated workers, who used to look after autistic individuals and who used to look after individuals who are developmentally delayed and need a lot of help, that they have to accept less than \$9.50 an hour, that they have to take a wage cut. Since those workers believe their work is more important than \$9.50 an hour, those employers are now using scabs, scabs who are untrained, scabs who know nothing about how to care for autistic individuals.

Minister, what are you going to do to repair the situation that you have created out there?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I would just like to remind the leader that actually as a result of the changes we have made to the Labour Relations Act, in spite of the fact that we have had numerous agreements come to a conclusion this year — in fact we had well over 3,000 — we fortunately have had in this province labour peace, and certainly the changes that we have made to the Labour Relations Act have contributed to the labour peace. They have also contributed to the fact that the workplace parties are becoming more self-reliant in the resolution of their own disputes.

**Mr Hampton:** It's an interesting definition of labour peace that the Conservative government has. In fact, already this year 1.4 million person-days have been lost to lockouts and strikes, a lot worse than it has been.

I want to tell the minister, at the Ottawa-Carleton Lifeskills the 120 workers there have been locked out. This is not a strike situation. This is where the employer has locked them out and has said, "You take a wage cut below \$9 an hour." With respect to the Ottawa Valley Autistic Homes, again it's an employer lockout. With respect to the Steelworkers Local 5297 in Ottawa, 300 people, it's a lockout by employers.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question.

**Mr Hampton:** With respect to IATSE, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees union with Cineplex Odeon, it's a lockout and they're demanding an 80% wage cut.

Minister, do you call that labour peace in the province of Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Mr Speaker, through you to the leader of the third party, I would simply share with you some information. You've talked about the fact that there are person-days lost and you feel that those days are too high. I would remind you that both Manitoba and British Columbia have higher rates of person-days lost as a percentage of total time worked for the first nine months of 1996, and I would also share with you the information



that BC bans the use of replacement workers. So for you to suggest that it's the replacement worker ban that is contributing to the problems, that is not the case.

**Mr Hampton:** I draw the minister's attention again: 1.4 million person-days lost in Ontario as of September 30 of this year — 1.4 million. That's what has been lost.

I want to give her some other examples. For example, Goldcorp in Red Lake, Ontario, 186 workers, and the employer is using scabs, an employer which has a terrible environmental record, not just in Canada but in the United States and elsewhere, which owes millions of dollars in back taxes and by its own admission operates the most unsafe mine in Ontario. Again, a situation where the employer is using scabs. CAW Local 252, Bramalea Rebuilders, 75 workers; again, the employer is using scabs. Or let's go to Metropolitan Toronto Association for Community Living, 800 workers, and again, scabs are being used.

Minister, is this a labour and employment record in Ontario that you are proud of? Are you proud of using scabs to lower people's wages and working conditions?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would respond to the leader of the third party in this way. You are deliberately distorting the facts. As I have just pointed out to you —

**Mr Hampton:** On a point of privilege, Speaker: These were all reported in the newspaper. The minister —

**The Speaker:** Minister of Labour.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would point out to you that when it comes to the loss of person-days that both Manitoba —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Minister of Labour.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would point out that when it comes to the number of person-days lost, both Manitoba and British Columbia have a much higher rate than we do in this province and, as I indicated to you, British Columbia actually has a ban on replacement workers, so obviously that's not having an effect. I would also tell you that our strikes this year in 1996 in the first 10 months are only 113 compared to 129, which will probably result in us having one of the lowest number of strikes in the last decade. Now, the one point that you need —

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** You brought violence to those picket lines.

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, come to order, please.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** The one point that you seem to conveniently not be addressing is the reason for the person-days lost high number that you say is so high is the fact that for the first time in the history of this province OPSEU was given the opportunity to strike. That was you that gave them the right.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As I understand your ruling, it is now in order for the opposition to observe that the Minister of Labour deliberately distorted this situation. Is that correct?

**The Speaker:** With respect to the member for Algoma, if you accuse a member of distorting the situation, I'm not going to rule you out of order, no.

1430

## IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Premier and it has to do with the Ipperwash Provincial Park incident where a native died for the first time in 100 years in a land claim dispute. As more and more information comes out, it is clear there was extensive political interference by your government in this very sensitive police operation.

The report on the weekend from the paper points out that your member Mr Beaubien arrived at the police command post only hours after the beginning of this, informing the police he was going to phone you, Premier. Mr Beaubien goes on to state later on that he doesn't mind taking controversy if the police services can't handle this situation.

The report goes on to point out that the Solicitor General's office didn't feel the situation was being handled properly. Then Mr Beaubien states, and you have not denied this and I assume it's true, that he sent you, Premier, a fax outlining his intentions — in other words, what Mr Beaubien was going to do with the police involving the natives in this particular situation — and was awaiting a reply back from you.

In light of all of this inappropriate, unacceptable political interference by you and the rest of your government members, will you now agree to a public inquiry so we can get at the root of this political interference by you and your government?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I am tempted to refer to deliberate distortion of the facts because that's what we've just heard from this member repeatedly on the whole situation of Ipperwash. Let me make it very clear that there has been no political interference and that to draw any other conclusion is a distortion of the facts.

I want to make it clear and repeat that as far as police operations, there has been no interference in anything that's gone on — we've indicated that to you — either by myself or by any members of our staff. As has been indicated by the Attorney General and by the Solicitor General, because there are a number of cases pending here, as soon as we're advised that it's appropriate, we're happy to release information and we've not ruled out a public inquiry.

**Mr Phillips:** Here's the problem, Premier, and I'll be as direct as I can with you. We asked you if you knew of what was going on at Ipperwash in terms of the police buildup. You said you did not, nor did your staff. We then found out that wasn't the truth. We found that Mr Beaubien had informed your staff. You said you weren't aware that Mr Beaubien had visited the police command post. In fact, he had on several occasions and had been in touch with your office. You said you would release the faxes that Mr Beaubien sent you — that's what you told the House — and now you refuse to release them.

The problem is that frankly we don't trust you on this matter. We want to see a public inquiry into this matter so we can get at the root of this political interference in this. I gave you the examples. It's here for you in the paper, Premier. There was political interference. Mr Beaubien was at that police command post on at least



four occasions, was there without any question, and was telling them he was in touch with you.

I repeat, Premier, because we don't want you to wait a year and then say you're not going to have a public inquiry: There is enough evidence already to call for that public inquiry. Will you commit today to a public inquiry so we can get at the root of this political interference?

**Hon Mr Harris:** There's absolutely nothing that I have seen printed in the paper or heard, other than any deliberate misrepresentation of the facts, that would cause me to conclude other than that there's been no political interference, there's been no intervention. There has been a member very concerned, as would any member be, about a difficult situation in his riding, trying to find information for his constituents. However, we've indicated we're very unhappy with what happened at Ipperwash. Surely nobody is happy with that.

When the law cases are settled, or if the lawyers tell us it's appropriate to release information sooner, I've said I have no problem with any of the information being released. As soon as the lawyers tell me we'll not be interfering with the justice system or a fair trial for anybody who is now being tried or any of those cases, I'd be happy to do so.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Attorney General. For three months now you have been deliberately distorting the facts with respect to the family support plan in this province and the bungled mess that you caused.

I have another case today. This is another case of a family support plan file that has been lost in the black hole of Downsview. Susan Wilkins, a brand-new registrant, had a court order for \$1,300 per month for the support of her three children issued in July. The papers were filed with the family support plan on August 2. She has not received one penny. She's called numerous times. My office has faxed the MPP line. None of us has received a response.

On Monday last she called her ex-husband's employer and found out that they'd not even received a garnishee order at this point in time, these many months later. She called your office. Your office checked with the family support plan and were told they couldn't get an answer until they found her file. On Wednesday they called and told her that her file was at Downsview, that it would be ordered, it would arrive on Thursday, she'd have her answer. It's Monday — no answer. She's left messages at your offices today to try and get an answer. Minister, she's got three children. She and her children are owed over \$7,500. Her husband is —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Attorney General.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I will check that and find out what the status of that case is and report back to the member.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Maybe while the minister is checking that case, he can check this one as well, another case where we have a problem due directly

to the cuts you made to the family support plan office in August by laying off 290 staff and by closing the regional offices.

Rob Sutherland has a court order which is adjusted when he goes on UIC. Specifically, his support is reduced to \$100 and the WCB, that he normally pays from the pension of \$450, is cancelled when he is on UIC. Since August, he's been on UIC. Every two weeks we have been faxing his UIC stubs from my office to the family support plan to prove that he's unemployed and to try to get the support payment adjustment. To date, the adjustment has not been made. He is owed \$450 for August, September, October and November.

The additional problem is that he's been trying to open a new UIC claim. He was told by his UIC worker last week that the UIC cannot open his claim because the justice department cannot reach the family support plan office in order to confirm the details of his support order.

I say to you, Minister, can you tell me why you're financing the tax cut on the back of Rob Sutherland and his 11-year-old son?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Again I can't comment on an individual case, but what I can tell you is that the Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears were very clear and want me to remind you —

**Ms Martel:** For four months they've been faxing statements every two weeks.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** — that your own government chose to ignore this very issue and failed to pass legislation that was needed then and is needed now.

**Ms Lankin:** That is not the same issue. You are deliberately distorting the facts.

**The Speaker:** Order. Members for Sudbury East and Beaches-Woodbine, come to order, please.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I might also tell you that last week, \$8.3 million was paid out of the family support plan. So far in November, 88,224 people have been recipients of \$27 million that has come out of the family support plan.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I'll warn the member for Sudbury East; I'm warning the members for Cochrane North and Windsor-Sandwich too. Come to order.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As a result, you can see that considerable increases in money are being paid out of the family support plan and I would hope that everyone will receive their money and begin to receive it in a timely way.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Ms Lankin:** It's your responsibility. Why don't you make sure —

**The Speaker:** Member for Beaches-Woodbine, that's the final warning.

**Ms Lankin:** Well, first —

**The Speaker:** No, no. That's the third and final one.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** My question is for the Minister of Labour. It's been brought to my attention that last Thursday there was a press conference here at Queen's Park hosted by the NDP labour critic and members of the Ontario Federation of Labour and the

Ontario Network of Injured Workers. It's my understanding that at this press conference several unfair statements were made regarding the government's plans to reform the Workers' Compensation Board, unfair allegations regarding the deindexation of pension benefits for injured workers. Will the minister clarify this important matter for members of the House?

1440

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I want to indicate that we do take the issue of reform of the workers' compensation system very seriously. Unfortunately, the issue of deindexation was treated in a very inaccurate manner last Thursday. There was the implication that it would be this government that would be totally responsible for deindexation. We know that is not the case. The deindexation first occurred under the NDP through the introduction of Bill 165, when you removed \$18.1 billion from the hands of 125,000 injured workers. I think it's absolutely essential that we correct the record.

**Mr Arnott:** I participated in those hearings on Bill 165 and I'm shocked that the NDP would blame the Progressive Conservative government for a policy that they initiated while they were in power, in an effort to arrest their flagging popularity.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Cochrane South, come to order. The member for Halton Centre, come to order.

**Mr Arnott:** My supplementary to the Minister of Labour is this: Is she aware of any other unfair allegations contained in the information package, distributed with the endorsement of the NDP last week?

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Are you giving \$6 billion to your corporate friends?

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, come to order.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Unfortunately, there were many errors in the presentation of the material on Thursday. One of them was the fact that our assessment rates were low. That is simply not the case. At \$3, our assessment rates are the second-highest in Canada. We are second only to Newfoundland, which has a higher rate.

Also, there was mention made that the board had a surplus this year of \$510 million. Yes, that is so, and fortunately that's good news, but what they did not mention is the fact that between 1991 and 1995 the NDP removed over \$1.65 billion from the WCB investment fund to cover their annual benefit costs. This unsustainable policy threatens the future benefits of injured workers, and we simply cannot allow that to continue.

## RENT REGULATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** My question is to the minister who doesn't want to be in housing, the Minister of Housing.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** There is no minister by that name. You'll have to come up with the correct title in order to put your question.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** He did.

**The Speaker:** Order. There's only one Minister of Housing, and that's not what I heard. If you want to put it correctly, you can.

**Mr Curling:** To the Minister of Housing. Is that all right, Mr Speaker?

**The Speaker:** That's fine.

**Mr Curling:** This morning, I sponsored a press conference where the Cooperative Housing Federation of Canada and the Coalition to Save Tenants' Rights released this report on the affordability of rental housing in Ontario. The results are clear: More people are having a harder time paying their rent than ever before. More than 220,000 people in Ontario are spending half their income on rent. With the cuts from your government since taking office, those who rely on social assistance are getting hit on all sides. About a third of tenants are on some form of social assistance, and you're hitting them again with the rent hikes that will come with your bill.

It's an absolute fallacy that your tenant protection bill will help tenants. Only you say that it's going to be more affordable. You're taking rental units —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** That's a very interesting report. If there was ever a document that showed that the existing system isn't working, it's this one. All the numbers in this report relate from 1990 to 1994 and they do show that tenants were not getting a good deal, that rents were out of control. Who was in power from 1990 to 1994? Not this government.

I can now point out to you that there was a report put out by CMHC that indicates that the demand for rental housing in Toronto between 1996 and 2001 will drop. The situation is getting better.

**Mr Curling:** When this minister stands up and says it is affordable for people to have rental units here, you know it is not affordable here at all. Tenants are finding it very difficult to rent. You have called this tenant protection legislation. This is really a tenant harassment act. How does a tenant go to a landlord when they have roaches, when they have poor heating facilities, when the stove doesn't work? Could you tell me that? Will you withdraw this Bill 96 that does not protect tenants but gives a wealth of opportunities to landlords?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again, all the numbers and all the information the member is referring to are based on a report using data between 1990 and 1994. The bill we've introduced is correcting much of that and is bringing in a system that is fair and is equitable and works. It works for tenants and it works for landlords. The availability of rental units is increasing. It's up by 50% in the last month, which shows that people have confidence in the direction this government is going in.

**The Speaker:** New question, the member for Fort York.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** My question is to M. Leach, the Minister of Housing. Minister, last Thursday you tabled the landlord protection act, the act that will cause rents to go up for thousands and thousands of tenants. Oh, it will do that, Minister. You've taken controls off the apartments when tenants move out, and your own economist, M. Lampert, said that over a five-year period 70% of all tenants move — that means 70% of all tenants will get a rent increase — and you've made



tenants sitting ducks, who will be facing anywhere from 7% to 10% increases.

This study done for the co-op housing federation by Lapointe Consulting points to a growing affordability problem. This study is very relevant. It says that 36% — listen, Minister; you're not listening — of all tenant households now have trouble affording their rent. It's a very recent study. Some 36% have trouble affording their rent. That's 540,000 households. What do you say to the 540,000 households whose rent will go up and up under your plan?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again I'll have to point out for the members of the third party that this is a report that's based on information from when they were in power. The data are absolutely irrelevant to what's going to happen with the future. We're bringing in a system that is going to bring fairness and equity back into the rental housing business. If they would get real recent results from CMHC, which were released last Friday, they would show that the availability of rental stock is increasing and things are getting a whole lot better for tenants.

**Mr Marchese:** The minister is not listening. That's a big part of the problem. This study is very relevant and it says — I don't know how he can discount it — that 36% of all tenant households have trouble affording their rent. How can you discount that? They're real figures. That means it's a reality. The reality hasn't disappeared. The only way this bill will make rents go down is if it means the market is suddenly flooded with affordable rental housing.

Well, that's not going to happen. You are not building, you and your government. You've destroyed the Rental Housing Protection Act, which means more rental housing will disappear, and the private sector is not building. They've told us that. Phil Dewan, the head of the landlord lobby, says this legislation will not make them build and developers and landlords told the legislative committee last summer that gutting rent controls won't make them build either.

I asked you Thursday and I'm going to ask you again: Name the landlords or developers who are going to build affordable rental housing in the GTA because of your legislation. Just name one.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I can tell the honourable member, and I said this when we went to hearings last August, that this legislation, on its own merit, is not going to create a housing boom. We never said it would; in fact, we said just the opposite. What we said it will do is that this legislation, in conjunction with the other changes we're going to make that you didn't bother to address, like addressing the property tax situation, which is the biggest drain that tenants face — 40% of their rent goes in property taxes and that issue has to be addressed — that, in conjunction with two or three other changes we're proposing to make, will generate growth. We have commitment to see that growth happen.

1450

#### SALES TAX HARMONIZATION

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, on Friday I read in

the newspaper that you've reiterated that Ontario is not interested in harmonizing our provincial sales tax with the federal GST. But then I also read that the federal government is still working on its harmonization plans. Now, we are or we aren't. Is Ontario continuing to talk with the federal government about harmonization? If not, why not?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** We have received no new offer from the federal government for many months now on sales tax harmonization. The offer that is on the table, and the one that quite frankly the three Atlantic provinces agreed to, would in our estimation shift approximately \$2 billion of taxation from the backs of businesses on to consumers in Ontario. That is not on as far as we are concerned. It would also broaden the base considerably on items that would be subject to tax that are not taxed now in the province, and that's unacceptable.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Recently the premiers of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland were in Toronto and they announced that harmonization would create an Atlantic advantage for their investors. If the deal is not good for Ontario, how can it be so advantageous for those three eastern provinces which have chosen to participate?

**Hon Mr Eves:** First of all, as the member knows, I presume, and other members know, the federal government is paying those three Atlantic provinces almost \$1 billion to subsidize them for their lack of revenue over the next four years, which they will be losing. Secondly, you may have read or heard in media reports last week that one particular department store chain in New Brunswick alone has closed five stores and claims that they're looking at closing another seven stores simply because of the cost of implementing the new combined, harmonized PST-GST tax.

Things like home heating fuel for the average consumer in those Atlantic provinces will go up \$160 a year. The price of purchasing a new home will go up by \$3,000 or \$4,000 a year. Other personal services will go up substantially because items are now being taxed that weren't being taxed before. That in fact is leading to the loss of jobs in those three Atlantic provinces. We are not interested in losing jobs in the province of Ontario; we're interested in creating jobs.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, on Thursday in response to a question in the House, your colleague the minister responsible for women's issues acknowledged very clearly the fact that in January your government was aware of the problems you were going to incur as a result of shutting down the regional offices and opening up your 1-800 office out of Downsview. You had a document January 18, a business plan that clearly told you there was going to be a reduction in service. People, women and children 90% of the recipients, would have been affected. Your colleague brought it to your attention as well in January.

Can you explain to this House how you allowed this gross mismanagement and incompetence with regard to



the handling of the shutting down of these offices and the damage that you have inflicted on women on children? You knew in January, as your colleague acknowledged on Thursday. What have you done about it?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** What we have done about it is we have ensured that in the first three weeks of November, \$27 million was paid out to 88,224 recipients. Last week \$8.3 million was paid out to 27,425 recipients. This weekend, 297 MPP inquiries were dealt with, out of which 12 required follow-up, which is being done this morning. We also are able now to process more than 5,000 transactions a day, up 25% in productivity over where we ever were. So that's what we've done to date.

**Mr Agostino:** The response and the attitude of this minister shows clearly the arrogance and the incompetence of you as minister and of your ministry in handling this particular transition. Minister, how can you sit there and continue to tell us the plan is working? In my own office we have over 80 cases that are still outstanding. You knew in January but you deliberately allowed the battering and beating up of women and children in Ontario to continue because of your incompetence and your failure to fix the plan.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Hamilton East, it's out of order to suggest that the minister deliberately allowed the battering and beating up of innocent women. I would ask that you withdraw.

**Mr Agostino:** I withdraw. What the minister has done is deliberately allow women and children to suffer in this province as a result of the change you have made to the plan. One quick example: I have a constituent from Thorold, a gentleman who called my office. He gets \$200 a month withdrawn from his bank account to go to his wife and two children he is paying support to. Two weeks later this \$200 cheque was sent back to him to put back in his own bank account. They're not getting the money.

Minister, will you do the honourable thing in view of the fact that you have known since January and resign and allow this plan to get fixed by another minister who is more competent than you are?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** We are taking steps now to take a plan that didn't work very well, that was \$1 billion in arrears, and we're moving it into a new plan that we hope will provide much better coverage for people who depend on the plan. We are now processing cheques within 24 to 36 hours. Under the old plan, where so many of these cheques were being done manually, this could take up to a week. As I've indicated, we have increased by 25% the productivity in allowing us to increase productivity to put more cheques through the system. We're contacting 2,000 employers who have over five payors on their payroll in order to make sure that they send cheques through properly so they can be involved in electronic banking and thus enhance the ability to speed up payments and thus make the plan a better plan.

#### PARENT-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. On November 7

you were questioned in this House about a phone call your executive assistant placed on your behalf to the firm Cassels Brock and Blackwell. The phone call concerned a letter that a lawyer with the firm, Brian Donovan, had written to the Who Does What subpanel on education financing on behalf of a group of parents from Franklin community school in my riding. They were concerned that a panel which was in a position to be advocating some drastic changes to the education system in this province was operating in the dark in secret locations, with secret terms of reference and with no representation from the education sector in Metro Toronto.

Your response to the question that day was that the concerns of these parents "seemed so frivolous." Minister, can you tell this House today what supreme authority gives you the right to deem the concerns of those parents, concerns that might shortly be before the courts, frivolous?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I think when anybody wants to try and take somebody to court for providing advice, it doesn't seem very appropriate to me. I also think it's very appropriate that when you get a letter from a law firm that's threatening to take legal action on a process that's under way, it's an appropriate thing to do to call that law firm and inquire what this is all about. And that's what I said before. We called the law firm and said, "Are you serious?" The law firm —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** The principals of the law firm said they didn't know anything about the matter and that's the last we heard of it.

**Ms Churley:** Minister, I can assure you this is not the last you will have heard of it. You don't seem to understand how serious this situation is. This is about citizens' rights to due process being denied, because at the very least an implicit threat was made on your behalf.

This is the situation: We'll never get to know whether the courts would have agreed with your assessment of these concerns as being frivolous because the actions of your staff, operating on your behalf, had the effect — claims Mr Donovan and he's saying this. As you know, he no longer has a job there. He was pulled off the case by the firm after that phone call made on your behalf. The Franklin group never had the chance to make their case for an injunction because of the action of your executive assistant acting on your behalf. It sent a chill through the firm of Cassels Brock and Blackwell. We don't know what was said, but it had at the very least the appearance of a threat. Minister, what was said in that phone call to Cassels Brock and Blackwell?

**Hon Mr Leach:** The lawyer in question is still a lawyer. I assume there was nothing to stop him from proceeding with the action. There's nothing to stop him now from proceeding with the action if he feels it's appropriate.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Cochrane South. Minister?



**Hon Mr Leach:** There's nothing to stop the individual in question from taking action now if he chooses to.

**Ms Churley:** They've reported, Al. It's too late. The subcommittee reported.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Then you could obviously see that there was absolutely nothing wrong with the action. There's no way you can take action against somebody from providing advice. The Crombie panel doesn't make any decisions; it makes recommendations and provides advice. We make the decisions.

1500

## ONTARIO FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I wish to question the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Last week, Minister Villeneuve attended the 1996 convention of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I also attended, as did other rural MPPs from both sides of the House. I have received feedback from farmers as a result of your presentation, Minister, to the OFA. Much of the input I received concerned crop insurance, safety net programs and how the plans for the development of AgriCorp are coming, to take responsibility for these kinds of programs. What feedback have you received with respect to AgriCorp and also with respect to other deliberations at the Ontario Federation of Agriculture?

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I want to thank my colleague for that question. Yes, I was very pleased to attend the Ontario Federation of Agriculture annual meeting last week. It was one of the most successful annual meetings the federation has ever had, with a very large attendance.

On AgriCorp, the agricultural community is quite prepared and able to take into their own hands and look after what they need. I certainly feel that's where the responsibility lies.

I want to congratulate the OFA president, Tony Morris, for his acclamation. I want to congratulate the new and returning executive who were elected last week. I promise, as do all of our colleagues, to work with the OFA for the betterment and continuing to keep our food producers on the leading edge, which is where they are.

**Mr Barrett:** The minister will no doubt remember that in the Common Sense Revolution's rural economic development task force we promised Ontario's food producers that we would work towards strengthening Ontario's Farm Practices Protection Act, more commonly referred to as the right-to-farm bill.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Would you come to order, please. Thank you. Go ahead.

**Mr Barrett:** A few months ago the Ontario Federation of Agriculture submitted a draft right-to-farm bill to the minister. Could the minister tell this House if any work is being done to ensure that farmers have proper protection against nuisance complaints?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Yes, the OFA did present a draft bill and it's certainly in the direction this government wants to go. We must provide more protection to our farmers and our food producers. They are a very import-

ant sector of our economy. Any country or any province that has let its agriculture go down will stand to suffer. This government has brought in new money, \$15 million of the Grow Ontario program. We've brought in a rebate on sales tax, \$20-plus million.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** It's difficult to get the attention of the NDP, particularly because they always have their own agenda. I want to remind them that they were the government that shut down two of our five agricultural colleges and then gave us a \$50-billion debt to boot. That's what they did, and now they sanctimoniously try to give us advice. We have to take it with a little grain of salt.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Last year you announced an 18% cut in hospital budgets. You know and I know and all members of the House know that this has resulted in nurse layoffs, replacement of registered nurses with less qualified staff and difficulties in access to services.

Minister, let me tell you about Angelina Marrone.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Put it on Hansard.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister of Agriculture, would you come to order, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** And the member for Hamilton East, come to order.

**Mrs Caplan:** I'll tell you about Angelina Marrone. This 69-year-old grandmother was admitted to hospital on November 2 with chest pains. It was determined almost immediately that she required an angiogram to diagnose the severity of her heart condition, but the doctors encountered obstacle after obstacle. In the interim, her condition worsened and she was transferred to an intensive care unit in the same hospital on November 15.

Her family is here today in the gallery. They have just learned that she is being transferred to a hospital where she can get her angiogram, but they are concerned because she has already been bumped twice. They want to know what you say to her and to her family and others. Is this what people can expect —

**The Speaker:** Member for Oriole, thank you. Minister of Health.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** I know the federal government has cut health care, but we have not. Second, there have been no cuts to the cardiac program at all through hospital budgets; it is a fully protected program. We have increased cardiac surgeries in this province by 19%, or almost 1,500 surgeries, and we have the shortest waiting lists in Canada.

This government has got rid of waste and duplication, and soon we'll take other steps to make sure that we have a more efficient system and that we drive dollars towards patient care. We've done that in cardiac, and we've taken great strides to reduce the waiting list and increase the capacity so we have a better system and people can be looked after on a timely basis. You don't tell your

constituents we've cut health care, because you know that is blatantly untrue.

**Mrs Caplan:** There's \$1.3 billion in hospital cuts, and that's the truth and that's what gets you in trouble.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** It's federal government cuts by \$2 billion. Stop playing games.

**The Speaker:** The member for Oriole and the Minister of Health. Minister of Health, you must withdraw that last comment. You can't tell somebody it's blatantly untrue.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I withdraw.

**Mrs Caplan:** And resign.

**The Speaker:** Member for Oriole.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I might have a problem with that one, but at least you withdrew. Thank you.

## PETITIONS

### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature.

1510

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have petitions forwarded to me by Karen Rabideau, who's the union counsellor of the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers International Union, Local 93B. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario; and

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

I add my name to theirs.

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough):** I have a petition on behalf of a number of my constituents.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we believe that provincial interest in public libraries in Ontario is fundamental to the rights of all Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to maintain the provincial interest in public libraries by ensuring the continuance of the following:

"(1) grants to ensure that all Ontarians have equalized access to library materials and services;

"(2) coordination of resource-sharing programs such as interlibrary loan and Internet access;

"(3) policy to ensure the future of the network of Ontario public libraries;

"(4) provincial assistance directly to libraries at the service level, for example, through Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Service-North;

"(5) legislation that maintains the autonomy of public library boards."

I affix my signature.

## LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas the government of Ontario appears to be moving towards the privatization of retail liquor and spirit sales in the province; and

"Whereas the LCBO provides a safe, secure and controlled way of retailing alcoholic beverages; and

"Whereas the LCBO provides the best method of restricting the sale of liquor to minors in Ontario; and

"Whereas the LCBO has an excellent program of quality control of the products sold in its stores; and

"Whereas the LCBO provides a wide selection of product to its customers in modern, convenient stores; and

"Whereas the LCBO has moved forward with the times, sensitive to the needs of its customers and its clients; and

"Whereas the LCBO is an important instrument for the promotion and sale of Ontario wines and thereby contributes immensely to grape growing and the wine-producing industry;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the government of Ontario abandon its plan to turn over the sale of liquor and spirits to private liquor stores and retain the LCBO for this purpose."

I affix my signature and hand this petition to Lauren Kennedy of St Denis Elementary School in St Catharines.



## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly from the municipality of Sault Ste Marie and it goes like this:

"Whereas occupational health and safety is a priority for the workers in the city of Sault Ste Marie and district; and

"Whereas occupational injuries and illnesses impact not on just the injured parties but on the community as a whole; and

"Whereas the WCB direct payment for most workers will be intimidating and the human and financial cost of injury and disease will increase and be moved over to the workers and their families; and

"Whereas the proposed changes to the act weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the city of Sault Ste Marie petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act and WCB act without proper consultation and not to erode the rights of all workers and to ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

This was moved and seconded by Councillors Ed Szczepanik and Wayne Deluca, and I add my name to it.

## EDUCATION

**Mr Bill Grimmer (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** I have a petition signed by approximately 350 residents in my riding. This petition concerns school councils and the general approach of the government to education, and I'll file it now.

## RENT REGULATION

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I have received another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario with respect to the removal of rent control and I wish to read it to the House.

"Whereas the government of Ontario has announced its intention to remove rent control from apartments that become vacant so that landlords can charge whatever rent they want; and

"Whereas the government's proposed law will eliminate rent control on new buildings and allow landlords to pass on repair bills and other costs to tenants; and

"Whereas the government's proposal will make it easier for landlords to demolish buildings and easier to convert apartments to condominiums; and

"Whereas due to the zero vacancy rate in Metro Toronto the removal of rent control will cause extreme hardship for seniors and tenants on fixed incomes and others who cannot afford their homes;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario to keep the existing system of rent control."

I agree with the petitioners and I will affix my signature to it.

## TAX REDUCTION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I have a petition from 20 people who are urging this government to stop the cuts to the Ontario poor and urging the people of Ontario watching to express their conscientious objection to the tax cut. This is a petition to the Legislature of Ontario and it reads:

"We, the undersigned, request that the Legislature of Ontario not approve any tax cuts until the causes of poverty and unemployment in Ontario are dealt with effectively and until the province's debt and deficit are paid down."

I affix my name to this petition.

## SNOWMOBILE REGISTRATION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** It's my pleasure to rise today to present a petition to the Legislature of Ontario and also to the Minister of Transportation, Al Palladini, Solicitor General Bob Runciman, and the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, Mr Bill Saunderson:

"Whereas the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs contributes in a significant way to the tourism and economy of Ontario; and

"Whereas the snowmobile clubs are very conscious of the safe operation and maintenance of their machines;

"Whereas the snowmobile operators spend thousands of dollars on these machines;

"Whereas these expensive modern machines usually have decals with names and other decorative lettering;

"Whereas the current MTO-issued registration numbers are not complementary to the other lettering on the machines;

"We, therefore, petition the Legislature of Ontario to amend the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act, Revised Statutes of Ontario for 1990, chapter 44, regulation 804, section 23, subsections (3), (4) and (5), and allow the operators to affix their own registration numbers at their own expense."

I am pleased to sign my name to this petition.

## SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the 800,000 children who ride the school buses of Ontario are at risk and their safety is in jeopardy from unsafe drivers who are not stopping for school buses; and

"Whereas the current school bus law is difficult to enforce since not only is a licence plate number required but positive identification of the driver and vehicle as well, which makes it extremely difficult to obtain a conviction;

"Therefore, be it resolved, that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That private member's Bill 78 be passed. The bill doubles the existing range of fines for identified drivers and establishes vehicle owner liability.

"We ask for the support of all members of the Legislature."

I have affixed my name to this petition.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition signed by members of Local 358 of the UFCW and the UBWW, United Brewers Warehousing Workers. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work,

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers; and

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

As I'm in support of this petition, I add my name to theirs.

1520

## SALE OF AMMUNITION

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the NDP government under former Premier Bob Rae passed legislation, Bill 181, the Ammunition Regulation Act, placing restrictions on the sale of ammunition in Ontario; and

"Whereas the provisions contained in Bill 181 are time-consuming, onerous and create unnecessary red tape; and

"Whereas the records for which these provisions have been produced do not track criminals; and

"Whereas Bill 181 was passed in only one day, without any discussion with law-abiding gun owners such as farmers, collectors, hunters and recreational shooters, who understand and have a deep respect for the power of firearms and ammunition and the need to maintain the use of their equipment in the safest of conditions; and

"Whereas Bill 181 will do nothing to combat the use of illegal ammunition;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal Bill 181, protect the rights of responsible firearms owners and work for tougher penalties against weapons offences."

I have also signed this.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I have a petition that's been signed by 3,000 people:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has recommended the closure of two acute-care hospitals in Sudbury; and

"Whereas the overall number of available beds will be reduced by approximately 35%; and

"Whereas the reduction in beds will affect Sudbury's ability to remain the referral centre for health care in northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas there will be a large number of layoffs in the health profession, impacting the quality of local health care and our Sudbury economy; and

"Whereas the global annual budget for Sudbury health care will be reduced by 25%;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to rescind the Health Services Restructuring Commission's recommendation to close two acute-care Sudbury hospitals."

To date, there have been 18,304 signatures, and I affix my name to it.

## CHILD CARE

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I have a petition here signed by literally hundreds of people from my riding and the riding of Algoma to the Legislature of Ontario. It goes like this:

"Whereas child care is an essential service and children should not be used to make money; and

"Whereas reducing current standards to minimal building codes compromises the safety of children; and

"Whereas providing funding to the private sector will lead to reduced accountability for tax dollars; and

"Whereas children's growth and development could be in serious jeopardy without trained professionals caring for them; and

"Whereas reducing monitoring inspections and increasing staff-child ratios will result in poor-quality child care programs; and

"Whereas staff wages are a major indicator of quality, proposed reductions and wage subsidies will have a negative impact on child care; and

"Whereas the need for parental choice in child care is recognized;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to reconsider the directions proposed in Improving Ontario's Child Care System, the report released by Janet Ecker, as we feel it will have a negative impact on the families of Ontario."

I sign my name to this because I agree with it.

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** I have a petition here concerning public libraries and public library boards, signed by approximately 29 residents in my riding. I'd like to file it today.

## RENT REGULATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:



"Whereas the Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants and allows for security and stability in their homes and communities; and

"Whereas lifting rent control in Ontario would leave tenants with uncontrollable rent increases and financial instability; and

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favouring easier and faster eviction by landlords;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to save rent control."

I affix my signature to this petition.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on estimates.

**Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals (Mr Alex D. McFedries):** Mr Curling from the standing committee on estimates reports the following resolutions:

Resolved that the supplementary estimates of the following ministries and offices not selected for consideration are deemed passed by the committee and reported to the House in accordance with —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Dispense? Dispense.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### ALTERNATIVE FUELS ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 SUR LES CARBURANTS DE REMPLACEMENT

Mr McGuinty moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 97, An Act to Accelerate the Use of Alternative Fuels in Motor Vehicles used by the Government of Ontario and its Agencies, Boards and Commissions / Projet de loi 97, Loi visant à promouvoir l'utilisation de carburants de remplacement dans les véhicules automobiles utilisés par le gouvernement de l'Ontario ainsi que par ses organismes, ses conseils et ses commissions.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Any comments?

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South):** Yes, very briefly. My private member's bill would require that government, over the course of a seven-year period, phase in the use of environmentally friendly fuels so that in seven years' time, 75% of all government fleet vehicles used by agencies, boards and commissions will be using environmentally friendly fuels.

### WINDSOR UTILITIES COMMISSION ACT, 1996

Mrs Pupatello moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr76, An Act respecting the Windsor Utilities Commission and the supply of heat energy within the Corporation of the City of Windsor.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

### DEVELOPMENT CHARGES ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 SUR LES REDEVANCES D'AMÉNAGEMENT

Mr Leach moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 98, An Act to promote job creation and increased municipal accountability while providing for the recovery of development costs related to new growth / Projet de loi 98, Loi visant à promouvoir la création d'emplois et à accroître la responsabilité des municipalités tout en prévoyant le recouvrement des coûts d'aménagement liés à la croissance.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Brief comments by the minister?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I would just like to say that I feel honoured to be able to introduce a bill that brings some balance and equality to the Development Charges Act after the mess we've been in for the last seven years.

## PARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Just before we move to orders of the day, I want to say that earlier today I ruled in order the Minister of Labour's comments with respect to — and I forget exactly the phrasing — "deliberately distorting the facts." Having reflected upon this while I was in the chair and heard exactly the use of it in the following 25 minutes of question period, I think it would be prudent on my part to suggest to the members of the House today that I think in future I would in fact rule that out of order. I thank you for your understanding —

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Make them all withdraw.

**The Speaker:** — and equally thank you very much, member for Cochrane South.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY AND SUPPORT ARREARS ENFORCEMENT ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 SUR LES OBLIGATIONS FAMILIALES ET L'EXÉCUTION DES ARRIÉRÉS D'ALIMENTS

Consideration of Bill 82, An Act to establish the Family Responsibility Office, protect the interests of children and spouses through the strict enforcement of support orders while offering flexibility to responsible payors and make consequential amendments to certain statutes / Projet de loi 82, Loi créant le Bureau des obligations familiales, visant à protéger les intérêts des enfants et des conjoints grâce à l'exécution rigoureuse des

ordonnances alimentaires tout en offrant une certaine souplesse aux payeurs responsables, et apportant des modifications corrélatives à des lois.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Oakwood had the floor. Further debate?

1530

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I welcome the opportunity today to participate in the debate on Bill 82. I have had the opportunity since this bill commenced with debate to listen to a number of other speakers on this very important issue. I will be referencing some of those comments in my remarks later on.

I want to first of all give the House some idea of why I am participating and why I think this issue is important. I was elected in 1987, in September, and from that point on I have always had an involvement in cases involving support issues. I suspect a part of that has been that Sudbury had a regional office until mid-August of this year and so, in more cases than in other parts of the province, people looked to us when they were having difficulties, when they were having trouble accessing the plan.

I want to commend the Liberal Party because it was actually the Liberal Party in April 1987 which first brought in the Support and Custody Orders Enforcement Act which for the first time ever allowed for enforcement action on behalf of the public by the province of Ontario. Up until that point, there was nothing in place in this province under a previous Conservative government to allow for any enforcement action whatsoever to be taken, predominantly on behalf of women and children. We all know there are recipients who are males who are looking after their children, but we also all know that the majority of the cases do involve women looking after their children or women who receive support payments for themselves.

I commend the Liberals for moving forward on that. We at that time, as did the Conservatives at that time, supported the Liberals in introducing that office and, for the first time ever, making sure that government played a direct and distinct role in assisting women and children and families to receive support payments. That was an important first step in the province, for the first time in the history of this province. From that point and in the last almost about 10 years, both the Liberals and our government made both changes in policy and changes in legislation to build upon that foundation.

Quite contrary to what was said here in the House by the member from, I believe, Brampton North, that from the moment this plan was started there were problems and that's why it was broken, I want to remind him that everyone knew from the moment this plan started that there would be arrears that would be showing, that would be arrears that for many years had not been collected, but that surely it was far better for the government to assume a direct role in trying to collect arrears and in trying to ensure that support payments flowed than for their government to wash their hands of the whole matter and not be involved in a public way at all.

So quite contrary to where I believe the member was heading, I believe it was a very important first step. I also believe that other governments have taken steps to improve upon that situation, which as the Attorney

General's own business plan says, is the best enforcement agency in this country.

Having said that, in 1988-89, I put in an appeal to the Ombudsman's office on behalf of 48 women who were having very specific problems in trying to get federal garnishments, particularly with respect to CPP or UIC. We worked with the Ombudsman's office over a period of months to try to get the then Liberal government to make some changes and to speed up the process which involved the justice department in order that women who needed garnishments from federal sources could get them in a timely and appropriate fashion.

But never since I have been a member, and that has been since September 1987, have I seen the kinds of calls, the kinds of distress that women are now in who are trying to use the family support plan — never — and I have been a member for almost 10 years now. That is attributed directly to the cuts this Attorney General made in August of this year when, in a single day, he laid off 290 experienced staff and announced that the regional offices of the family support program would be closed. Within four days, in the Sudbury office we went from a staff of 40 to a staff of 11 and some of those people were GO Temp staff. Two weeks after that, we were down to under nine.

That's what the office operated on, primarily supervisory staff including the regional manager, from that time on because the front-line staff took the package and were out the door in four days. That happened not only in Sudbury but in every regional office across this province. We also saw in Sudbury that within two weeks the over-the-counter service access was shut down and many women and children, many payors, many lawyers, many employers who used to access the Sudbury office for assistance were denied that access and referred to Downsview, which as we all saw in a video three weeks ago is not functional, nor will it be for many months yet to come.

I can say in terms of my experience with this plan that I have always in our office dealt with women and children who have had problems and I have never seen problems to the extent we are seeing now, where we receive two and three new calls every day, daily, from people who used to receive regular support payments and now are not because of the cuts this Attorney General made.

I was amused as I listened to some of the comments being made by the Conservatives and the reference they used to this system being broken, because in truth anyone who has followed this matter, and I have, since the inception of the plan cannot say with any legitimacy in this House or anywhere else that the plan is broken or that it's so seriously flawed that nothing can fix it.

I was disturbed by those references for two reasons.

First, I remind this House that over the last 10 years, since the Liberals first introduced a plan, there have been a series of incremental changes which have improved on the plan, brought more families in to receive support, allowed for greater enforcement than there ever was, and I agree with that.

I have to remind members again in this House that despite what the Conservatives said about the plan being broken, the fact of the matter is that under 42 years of



Tory government it was never a high-priority public issue for you folks. There was never an Attorney General under the former Conservative regime, which went on for 42 years in this province, who thought support orders were so important that the state should become involved in ensuring that support orders were met, in ensuring that enforcement took place on difficult issues. For the Conservatives to argue that somehow the plan is broken, that somehow the plan is seriously flawed and can't be fixed, I have to remind all of you, where were you in the 42 years when nothing happened on this issue under previous Conservative regimes?

Second, the comment that the plan is badly flawed or it's broken directly contradicts everything the Attorney General had printed in the business plan earlier this year with respect to this very plan. Members will recall that in early January or early February of this year, the Attorney General released the business plan with respect to the changes he wanted to implement in the family support plan and he said as follows: "Ontario is the only maintenance enforcement program in Canada which fully offsets the cost of services and provides a similar amount as net return to the government." He also went on to say in his own business plan about this important family support plan, "Ontario is the most 'cost per case' efficient program in Canada."

In numerous other points in the business plan, the Attorney General and the Attorney General's own staff commented upon how efficient and effective this plan was, the best enforcement agency anywhere in Canada, so how is it that several months after releasing a business plan that praises the family support plan, a business plan written for the Attorney General, I assume approved by the Attorney General and his political staff before it went out to the public, how can it be that we see such a dramatic change in attitude of the Attorney General, and how can it be then that several speakers who got up and read the speech that had been prepared for them by the Attorney General's office could in fact contradict so clearly what had been said about this plan only a few short months ago?

1540

I have to say that the only reason I believe we are starting to see those references now to "flawed and broken" in the Attorney General's comments and in the comments made by other speakers on this bill is that we are in a crisis now, and the changes he made were done directly to lead to that crisis so that he could make a number of changes which I believe will be extremely detrimental to women and families in this province. But he will gain acceptability for that, he will gain public acceptance for that change because the people who are caught now in the current crisis, which I believe he deliberately created, will assume that it's much better to opt out or do other things than it is to try and hold the state accountable for helping them receive support payments or for helping them try to collect arrears.

I think it is most regrettable — frankly I think it's shameful — that we now have a crisis that has been deliberately put in place by the Attorney General, a crisis I think which is only there to help him move forward some of the more difficult and, frankly to my mind,

unacceptable parts of this legislation in order to get it through. It reminds me of comments that were made very early on in the term of the Minister of Education and Training to his own staff when he said, "We'll have to create a crisis in education in order to implement the changes we want." I think the Attorney General has taken a page out of that book. I sincerely regret he has done that, because I think the consequence of that has been to leave thousands of families across this province right now in acute financial distress, families that used to receive ongoing support payments on a regular basis without a problem until his cuts.

The bill has to be looked at in the context of the crisis because, as I said, the crisis will undoubtedly allow some of the meaner and nastier pieces of this bill to go through. There are two that I want to comment on in particular because they are the two pieces of this that I am most concerned about if they are to be implemented in the shape and the way they appear in Bill 82 as it stands. The first one is the provision to allow payors and recipients to opt out of the plan, and the second is the change which provides the director with the discretion to write off arrears and to determine that there will be no further enforcement taken on cases.

In the first case, the provision to opt out of the plan worries me greatly. Not only is it quite a change from the very firm position we took in government when we said the program had to be mandatory in 1992, but frankly I see nothing in the Attorney General's bill which will deal with coercion. That was one of the reasons we made sure that the bill we put forward would include everyone, because there are no methods in this bill — and maybe they will appear in the regulations; God knows, because this House won't see them — there is nothing in place in this bill which will stop that kind of activity. I worry about that because there have been more than one recipient in my office who has had virtually no contact, nor does she want contact, for whatever reason — it's not my business to know — but for whatever reason does not want to have contact with the payor again. The plan stands as an independent force between the two of them, ensuring that money flows, ensuring that she is able to look after herself and her family.

What I find so curious is that the position that's being taken by the Attorney General now is quite different from the one which was taken by him in December 1990, when he, as critic, looked at our bill and said very clearly that there should be the involvement of the director in the plan, that payments should be made to the plan, and the director and the staff of the family support plan should be directly responsible for ensuring those payments went out. He said in the House on December 18, 1990, to this end: "I will be introducing two amendments to the bill. The first amendment seeks to allow those persons who are currently meeting the provisions of their support and custody orders to pay them directly to the director, without automatic collection. It is the responsibility of the director to forward these payments on to the support recipient."

Clearly, in 1990, the now minister but the then critic for the Attorney General felt that there was an important public-policy, public-responsibility role for the govern-



ment to play. The way the government would play that would be to ensure that payors, even if they weren't having their payments garnished and sent in by the employer, should at least have the option to send them in to the director themselves.

I don't understand why the position being taken by the Attorney General now in Bill 82 is different from the one that he was so concerned about, indeed the one he moved an amendment on, in December 1990. I can't describe why he's making such a change and why he feels that the plan has no legitimate role to play in terms of making sure that moneys are flowed in and then flow back out, be it from an employer or from the payor directly. I am only left to assume that it has something to do with the very significant cut in staff that the Attorney General made in August 1996, when overnight he issued layoff notices to more than 44% of the family support plan staff.

While the Attorney General likes to say in this House, "We have doubled the number of front-line staff," he conveniently neglects to mention that he has done that at a cost of cutting 40% of the staff in total and he is also doing that by making people who are going to work on the front line assume the jobs that two and three other people used to do under the former plan. I have to ask him, if the former staff, when they were staffed up to full complement, couldn't enforce arrears collections, how is this plan going to operate and do the same when it's operating with 40% less staff?

The real reason, I think, that the opting-out provision is here, that people can send cheques directly to the recipient without going to the plan, has nothing to do with whether that's a good idea and the Attorney General agrees with it; it has everything to do with the fact that there just won't be enough staff left to cope with the 1,200 new court orders which come on to the plan every month, in and out, of every year. I think that's the real motivation behind the change.

I worry about that, because I think what will happen is you will have people who will decide to opt out because they look at the current crisis they are in and they decide it's better to operate directly with their ex-spouse than to try to work through the plan. Then when they want to go back on to the plan, they will have to pay a fee to do that. But during that whole point in time, they will be in a position — not all of them, by any stretch, but any number of them will then be in a position to be coerced around other matters that are not monetary, including custody, for example. There is nothing in this bill that would stop those kinds of coercive activities from occurring to those people who opt out.

My second most serious concern around another very important piece of this bill has to do with the discretion which is now afforded the director of the plan to determine which court orders are going to be enforceable and which are not and which arrears are going to be collected and which are not. Again, I think that what's happening here, the first problem we have, is that there will not be enough staff left in the plan, given that 40% of the staff are going to be cut, to do effective enforcement. Even with the other changes that the Attorney General wants to

bring forward, I don't believe there will be enough staff to do that kind of work.

My second major concern is that I really believe the Attorney General is more interested in, two years from now, being able to stand up and to say that the plan now has only \$300 million or \$400 million worth of arrears, so, "Our plan has worked; the changes we have made, the centralization at Downsview, have actually resulted in much less arrears and much more money being collected."

But I think two years down the road, when the Attorney General wants to stand and say that, we will be able to point to the fact that the director of the plan, who is being given the authority in this bill to write off arrears, to determine which cases will be enforced and which won't, will excessively use that power and start to write off millions and millions of dollars of arrears from the point of time from which the bill is passed on to get to a much lower figure. I think that's what's behind the change.

1550

I find that really unacceptable because the people who really need enforcement action the most are the families who are in arrears, especially significant arrears. I want to mention to the House a case I heard that I had given to me about three weeks ago where a woman finally, after eight years, has just discovered that her ex-husband has been found, that a garnishment was put on the employer and that payments were being made. The problem is that this all started to go into effect in August, so even though she knows from the employer of her husband that payments are being made and arrears are starting to be made, because of the crisis at the plan she hasn't seen any of those cheques, hasn't seen one after eight years of finally seeing that there would be some enforcement action taken.

I think that under the government's plan she'll never have to wait eight years, because after two or three years without any enforcement the director is going to decide that case is not enforceable, it's not worth spending either public money, if the plan is still in the public hands, or in the case of a collection agency it's not worth their while, because they're not going to make a big profit on it, to actually put the staff dollars and resources in place to try and enforce that court order. There are thousands of women in this province who I have no doubt are in the same boat.

That is why under our government, and frankly under the Liberals, the cases did not become closed and inactive and shut down permanently. That is why we kept those cases open, because at a certain point in time that person is going to return to Ontario and enforcement action can be taken, or he's going to get a job and a garnishment can go to the employer in that case and try and start to collect arrears and ongoing support, or things will change that will allow for the first time ever those families to get money.

What I fear is happening with the changes proposed by the Attorney General under this section is the ways and means for the Attorney General to wipe out and wipe off the record hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of arrears so that in two years he can stand in his place in



this place and say: "See how well all our changes are working. See how well it has worked to have a centralized operation at Downsview." I fear that is the motivation behind that change, and that will mean thousands of families that deserve and need court-ordered support will never see it.

My concern about the bill overall is with respect to the ability of the Attorney General to implement the changes when he has been completely incapable of managing what was supposed to be a transition from mid-August until now. I have to speak about that as well, because when I look at the business plan, the business plan issued at the beginning of February this year made it clear that if the Attorney General was to proceed in reducing the staff to the extent that he wanted to and in cutting the regional offices, there would be chaos in the plan. The plan says very clearly that recipients would see this as a backward step, that recipients would see a reduced service level over the time of the change, that the plan had to, from day one, be fully staffed before the change took place, that you couldn't lay off people in mid-August and start to hire them in mid-November like this Attorney General has done.

There were numerous suggestions that came from front-line staff to say, "If you want to cut operating expenses of the plan by 35%, here are the ways and means we can do it without laying off the experienced staff, without closing the regional offices." The Attorney General ignored those many suggestions that came from his dedicated front-line staff. The Attorney General ignored the advice that came from his own senior management staff about what the impact would be if he laid off all the people in one day and closed the regional office. The Attorney General in this province ignored that advice from his front-line staff, from his senior management staff, and instead thought it was all right to throw thousands of women into financial distress in the way that he has, women and children who used to receive regular support payments, month in, month out, without a problem.

We have raised numerous cases in this House to try to get attention to this matter, to try to show how wrong it was and it is for this Attorney General to finance his portion of the tax cut on the backs of these families, because that's what it was all about. It was a blatant, partisan, political move to finance the tax cut, to take out his share of what was owing to finance the tax cut and to offer it up to his colleague the Treasurer. He did that on the backs of all of these families who used to receive support on a regular basis.

I have 104 cases in my office now. I have 39 where we have had no resolution because we can't even get a call back from the family support plan. I have women who call every day, who are receiving eviction notices, who are receiving notices from Hydro, from Bell Canada that the services are going to be cut off, who are going to food banks now because they do not have the funds they need to put food on the table for their families. I have never in my nine years as an MPP seen anything like it, not even with respect to workers' compensation, which is another issue and a number of other cases that we do a lot of in my office.

I blame the Attorney General for the financial crises that these women and children are in, and I ask him, and I would ask some of you to ask him, why it was that he thought he knew so much better than his front-line staff and his management staff about what was going to happen if he did what he eventually did. Why did he think he knew better than everyone who operated within the plan, everyone who understood all the complexities, all of the senior staff who had operated with the plan for a long time? Why did he think he knew so much better than they? And why did he move to cause so much crisis for people right across the province?

In fact, the system that he talks about, that he says with much pride is now working, the telephone system and the amount of money that is going out, is really a farce. Last week in London there was a most interesting meeting that took place, about 30 women there who were talking about their concerns, and they made it clear that the telephone system which he has trumpeted about in here on a number of occasions doesn't work at all.

Here is Mrs Taylor. Wendy Taylor, a mother of two, had support payments regularly for 14 years. They stopped when the London office closed. She said she's had problems getting through to a support plan worker on the toll-free line for months. On Monday, she said, she finally got through, "...but the woman on the other end of the phone line said I'm not on file and hung up. After 14 years they don't have a file on me? I don't think I've ever been treated so rudely in my life."

This was the same circumstance for Michelle Murphy. She placed a call to the family support plan Tuesday after reading in the London Free Press that Harnick had said the plan's problems are fixed. The woman who answered the phone said Michelle was not on line and could not help. Michelle said, "They may be answering calls, but they still can't do a damn thing for you."

That was the same kind of case that was raised in here today by my colleague from Beaches-Woodbine. It's the same kind of case that I raised in here on behalf of my constituent, where since the end of August my office has been faxing in every two weeks on a regular basis his UIC stubs to prove that he is on UIC, and we have not yet been able to get his court order varied. That's because not only are the phone lines not working, there is not enough staff in that place to cope with what's happening.

We also know that while the Attorney General, I believe it was today, said that some \$20 million had been collected and disbursed by the plan in the first three weeks of November, that figure falls far short of what this plan did in April, May and June of this year. In April, the plan disbursed \$34 million to recipients, \$4.2 million to FBA; \$44 million in May to recipients, \$4.2 million to FBA; in June \$39.4 million out to recipients, \$5.6 million back to FBA.

Regardless of what the Attorney General has said in this House, this plan is falling far short of what it used to be and it probably explains why we as an NDP caucus haven't been able to get from them the monthly stats on the disbursements, even though we asked for them every day last week. My concern with the bill is that, as we saw with this transition, the minister will be completely incapable of making the provisions work because there



won't be enough staff at the family support plan to implement them.

1600

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I have a few comments with respect to the remarks made by the member for Sudbury East. She appears to be dealing with two basic issues: one is the bill itself, which is basically a bill that makes enforcement measures in Ontario tougher, and the second is the transition between a decentralized system to a centralized system.

The bill has been put forward to protect women and children around this province. Since 1990, when I was first elected, many of the complaints that I heard in my office were from women who were having difficulty enforcing their rights to collect from their spouses. Any family lawyer, whom I'm sure the member has spoken to in this province, or certainly many of us have spoken to in this province, will tell you the system has not worked. The problem with respect to enforcement has clearly been a joke. In fact, many legal people, when they act for spouses, whether husbands or wives, will do what they can to keep it from being an order; in other words, rely strictly on the issue of being a separation agreement. Why did they do that? Because they then had control of their own actions. Garnishment proceedings could be taken almost instantaneously.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Tilson:** Well, they could get it in three days. My goodness, it took three months sometimes to get action when you start off a process to register your order. That was totally unsatisfactory. There were all kinds of people who simply didn't want to be part of the process.

With respect to enforcement, I again emphasize what this bill is doing. It will suspend drivers' licences for defaulting payors; it will report to credit bureaus parents who fail to pay their support; it will expand the definition of income to include advances, commission, severance and lump sum payments; and finally, it will take action against defaulting payors and those who help them in sheltering assets.

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I wish to congratulate the member for Sudbury East on her comments with respect to the unfairness that is built into this particular bill. Instead of the bill proposing to improve further the assistance to families and children, I think it goes a long way to take away whatever protection they have now. I wonder, and I think the member for Sudbury East has said it very well, how we can offer more protection when we are eliminating those service agencies that offer support to women and children.

The Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act was meant to improve the system as it is. What we have seen here is solely a change in the name, taking away the improvement that the bill was supposed to do.

They have eliminated two thirds of the staff, so how can we offer a better service to women and children when you eliminate two thirds of the staff? They have closed many of the regional offices — as a matter of fact, all of them — and they have centralized all the services,

all the system, in one particular office. They have created a 1-800 number to reach across the province for service and stuff like that.

Instead of giving more assistance, more help, to those people in need, what we have created is a terrible mess. We have created a bureaucratic nightmare. If the people are calling our office in droves, it's because they do not receive the assistance that the bill was supposed to give. I wish to commend the member for Sudbury East.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I just want to briefly congratulate the member for Sudbury East for clearly outlining, as she has done, the problems that exist with respect to this area of support and custody orders in enforcement of these payments.

I know that members opposite want to try and pretend that this piece of legislation is all of a sudden going to fix all the problems we have. I think it's important to note, as the member for Sudbury East herself pointed out, that there have always been problems in this area. None of us is standing here claiming that the system was perfect. Any of us who have had any dealings at all with this system know there have been problems historically, but the sheer reality that the government members want to try to ignore is that the actions that have been taken by the Harris government and the minister now responsible are causing the kind of havoc that we see in the system now.

The system was working to the extent that it was allowing women, largely women as we know, who were entitled to payments from their spouses to get those payments. Now we have seen hundreds, if not thousands, of situations in which that is no longer happening, and it's not happening simply and only because of the staff cuts and the changes that this minister and this government have brought about. It's as simple as that.

People are seeing here a very clear example of what the Mike Harris revolution is all about because now we are able to see that those "nameless bureaucrats" this government likes to attack are actually people who in this case were providing good and useful service. When you take those people out of the system, when you cut the system up, as this government is doing, you have the effect that the member for Sudbury East has pointed out, which is that thousands of women are no longer getting the money they are entitled to.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** It's interesting to listen to the response from the member for Oakwood, who points out that while there were problems in the system and there are problems in the system, no plan is perfect. Well, nobody's trying to reach perfection. I think we fall back on it. If it's broken or there are problems, the only way — it has to be an absolute model of perfection. Well, human beings aren't perfect, so why go to that ideal state?

What we're trying to achieve here is to fix up a problem that was, in my estimation from talking with constituents, a major fundamental problem not only in terms of enforcement but the dollar amount. If the NDP believes it was such a great plan back then and everything was working reasonably well, one reality I'd like to pose a question on is why the amount of outstanding arrears owed by those fathers who weren't paying their



required amounts into the plan was \$905 million. I find that an astounding figure. They say the plan was working reasonably well. Then why was there this outstanding amount? In my estimation, that was one of the fundamental root causes as to why the Attorney General had to introduce a new model of administration.

The other standard response is: "You can't ever change the number of people dealing with an issue. You have to have the status quo number. In fact, you have to increase it." I probably will be hearing an argument from them soon that you have to have a ratio of one bureaucrat to each new case coming in, so when you have 1,500 per month, you'd have to add 1,500 new people.

Those are some of the reasons why we've been dealing with this problem.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Sudbury East.

**Ms Martel:** Starting backwards, in response to the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, maybe you can explain to the public why your minister cut the staff by 40%, because that's what he did on August 1. He went in and issued layoff notices to over 40% of the staff, and those people aren't going to get their jobs back.

The second thing that he does is to try to fool the public by saying there are going to be all these new front-line staff. He conveniently neglects to mention, of course, that the front-line staff are now going to be doing the jobs that two and three other people used to do, quite separate and apart from the additional responsibilities which are going to be laid on them when and if this bill is passed.

Maybe you can explain why he cut 35% of the operating grant to the family support plan — that will happen over two years — and we have been left with the chaos that we have. The fact of the matter is, even though members across the way don't want to admit it, that as a direct result of that cut and the cut in staff, thousands of women and children who used to receive regular support payments across this province are not. Every single case we've raised in this House has been that similar circumstance and that similar situation.

I say to the member for Dufferin-Peel, who said again that the system has not worked, if he looks back to the enforcement that went on and the money that was collected, we went from collecting \$19.9 million in 1987-88 to \$367 million in 1994-95. Was it working well? Not as well as it could have been. Was it better than anything we'd had in place before? It sure was, because before, under 42 years of Conservative government, we didn't have anything. We had no enforcement mechanism whatsoever. Women and children had to take their chance in court, pay for lawyers, deal with the sheriff and try to seize what they could because this was not a huge public policy matter for you folks when you were in government for 42 years.

1610

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Hastings:** It's interesting to join this debate in terms of Bill 82, which I obviously favour because it's going to make some major changes and rectify some of the problems we've been dealing with for the past few years.

As mentioned earlier, the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, replaces the 1992 Family Support Plan Act, which is the current legislative mandate for the Ontario support plan. I must say I am really proud of the Attorney General, to see a new act giving Ontario some of the toughest payment enforcement measures in North America.

The NDP caucus across the floor continuously talks about the fact that the old plan was working, working really well. The member for Sudbury East just alluded to the fact that they had increased the amount of support payments from approximately \$19 million up to over \$300 million. However, even if that figure is true — and I can't challenge her because I think probably looking at the historical pattern, that would have occurred — you still have to take into account, in my estimation, that the family support plan is broken. It's not working. The opposition knows this. Our critics know this. We know that the women and children who are expecting to receive these enforcement payments for their financial livelihood know that fact too. They know the plan is broken because many families have been without support for over two years. I could show the member for Sudbury East specific cases in my own office.

The NDP say everything's practically fine, that there were hardly any problems with the family support plan until the Attorney General started to tamper with it. If the plan is so great and it's working so marvellously well, I still come back to the figure which the member for Sudbury East conveniently ignored, and that is the amount of outstanding arrear payments: \$905 million. That is a huge figure. Judging the plan's past history and success, I guess we have to now put a new definition of success into any dictionary, and that would be that if you have increased the amount of payments, you are successful, and you just sort of ignore the \$905 million that is still outstanding.

It is estimated that at the current rate of collection, even by our own best efforts, with the assorted problems of implementation we have, we are going to end up having a system owing about \$1 billion in early February 1997. I ask you, should taxpayers be expected to pick up the bill when far too many fathers easily dodge their responsibilities?

Why does the Attorney General have to fix problems with the family support plan? Again, I want to reiterate that fundamental fact, that fundamental reality, that there's about \$1 billion currently outstanding in child support payments. That \$1 billion means that women and children are denied the support they need. They suffer and are often forced into poverty. We recognize that fact as much as any member across the way.

The single mothers of Etobicoke use their support payments to provide food, shelter and clothing for their children. It is imperative that they receive the support payments to which they are legally entitled. Under the NDP, 77% of the plan's cases were not in full compliance, another interesting fact when you define success. For the benefit of the NDP, "full compliance means that all payments are fully up to date."

A third problem with the family support plan as it was is that the current caseload of 148,000 is growing at a



rate of about 1,400 cases per month. That's an astounding figure. It shows what's happening in our society in terms of relations between the spouses and how that spills over, adversely affecting children and families of all ages. Many people notice how easy it is to default on their payments without any chances of getting caught under the NDP plan, so they cease paying, leaving children to suffer.

Bill 82 ensures that women and children in Ontario get the justice and the financial support to which they are entitled. Under this act people who do not meet their family support responsibilities will be subject to a number of new enforcement measures. These include driver's licence suspension, credit bureau reporting, third-party enforcement, private sector partnerships to recoup debts, garnishment of joint bank accounts, better tracing and locating of defaulting payors and, finally, seizing lottery winnings. In addition, the government will also screen judicial appointments and appointments to any agencies, boards and commissions to ensure that the province does not appoint people who fail to provide and pay for their child support.

These tough enforcement measures are consistent with legislation created in other jurisdictions. Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and more than 20 American states have some form of licence suspension or licence withholding to collect support arrears. Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan have introduced legislation to suspend drivers' licences to collect support arrears.

Concurrent with these legislative changes, service improvements are being put in place, and this is the most difficult part to deal with in terms of the transition. These service improvements include the following: increasing the number of staff who are available to answer calls; introducing one-stop shopping so that one client server can respond to a client's inquiry; making it easier for customers to call or fax during a 24-hour period; providing greater consistency in specialized services by consolidating all operations into one location.

A transition team is in place to implement our government's improvements to the family support plan. I can speak from experience that my constituents who were not — and I emphasize that word again — not receiving support are now breathing easier because of the improved service, quite a contrary reality to what we're constantly hearing over there. I'm wondering why that is, and I'll deal with that in my follow-up remarks.

I must say that one of my constituents, Ms Genevieve King, was in danger of losing everything. She had spent all of her life savings to maintain her house, utilities, phone and cable. She had not received one penny from her ex-spouse in over two years, long before our government was elected. I can inform the House that she is now receiving the support to which she was entitled over two years ago, support that was long overdue.

I have an example of another constituent, Cindy King, who was in a similar situation. She called me from a pay phone at one time, because she lost her phone service, to ask if there was any way of receiving her support payments. I can't tell you the joy I experienced, and I was personally involved with this one, when she got a call

from my office that her household phone had been relinked and she was finally getting her payments.

I'd like to say, finally, that maybe one of the problems the opposition constantly hectors us about in the changeover is that they are not trained to deal with it in a more constructive way. I listen day by day in this House to some of these people who are used, I believe naïvely in a way, as pawns to support a political justification, a political *modus operandi*, that if we just left everything the way it was there'd be hardly any problems, even though I come back to the point that there's another \$905 million that's not being enforced. There are no payments being received. The test of this new plan will be in the next two to three years in terms of getting that amount down through these new mechanisms of payment for an enforcement of the support orders that are outstanding.

1620

The other thing I would like to add is that I believe provision is in the act for two spouses to work together on sorting out their finances for their children and whichever spouse is to be the receiver of financial aid without going into the support plan. To me, that's one of the best innovations in this legislation in terms of reducing that rate of 1,400 cases monthly in dealing with this problem.

Nobody said that in going to a new operation there weren't going to be problems, and I think the Attorney General has done the best he can. Certainly we're all human and maybe we haven't got the technology in place yet, but I think if the members of the opposition would work more with the staff of the Attorney General's ministry and try to get some of the most outstanding emergency cases down instead of using them as political criticism points only, then we would get through some of this, so that as we come into the Christmas season some of these families won't be standing out there in the cold, as is pointed out constantly by the member for Sudbury East.

I would simply like to add that this, I believe, is a good bill in terms of getting us into a new operation, getting up the technology and getting, above all, the amount of moneys outstanding over the last several years reduced significantly. That will be the litmus test, I believe, in terms of showing that this will be good legislation passed by this government.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell):** I'm glad to hear that some of the members of the government recognize that we have gone a little too far too soon with this amalgamation or the centralizing of the program.

**Mr Hastings:** Who said that?

**Mr Lalonde:** Well, you just said the technology's not in place yet. We tried to put the technology in place a little too soon because we did not analyse the system before we centralized all the services right here in Toronto. In eastern Ontario we have closed the office in Ottawa. Just in my riding alone — I'm looking at the list I just received from my riding office — 31 persons called last week to say they haven't received their payment yet, and most of them, their husbands have had their paycheque deducted.



Why have they not received their amount of money as yet? It's because the government hasn't got the technology in place as yet. I'm looking at one person here — I won't name the name, but this one is \$9,750 in arrears. This is in monthly payments. I don't think the government has the technology in place and I still say, once again, it's a shame to try and reduce the number of employees when we don't have all the services in place. I know the goal of the government is to reduce the number of jobs, but to reduce the number of jobs, really, when the technology is there. We don't have it yet.

At the present time in my riding alone we've been getting calls that the hydro has been cut to their apartment, there have been rent arrears, the people are getting thrown out of their apartment because they haven't paid their landlord. But I'm still saying that the government recognizes that it has made a mistake. Let's hope they will do everything in their power to resolve the problem as soon as possible.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I nearly leapt to my feet and objected to the imputation of motive in the speech by the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, but then, looking at the source, decided there wasn't any point in trying to make that point in a point of order. He has suggested that the only reason we are concerned is to try and make a political point, and he's wrong. We are concerned because people who were getting their money are not getting their money now and it's causing them a lot of difficulty.

The member is quite right. There are hundreds of millions of dollars outstanding in support payments. That is why we will be supporting the increased enforcement that's in this bill, even though we are sceptical that some of those measures will stand up to a challenge in a court of law. We will be supporting them because we think it is our job as legislators to do what we can to ensure that these dollars are paid, since they are the entitlement of those deemed to be recipients under support orders.

The member also needs to know that if he thinks the Attorney General is going to be able to measure his success by dumping all the hard-to-collect cases off the rolls, \$450 million, in his own words, that he deems to be uncollectible, and by dumping off all those people who've become so discouraged by the plan, because of the mess he's made of it in the transition, and therefore those dollars won't be collectible by the plan, anyone is going to believe that's success, the member is wrong.

If the Attorney General put these measures into place and saw over a period of a couple of years how many of those outstanding dollars were collected with these new measures and then made some determination as to whether it was appropriate to deem some of those uncollectible, we might be impressed. But we know what he's trying to do. He's trying to show that he's more efficient and effective by writing off hundreds of millions of dollars that aren't owed to him, that are owed to women and children.

**Mr Tilson:** The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale I think has emphasized the crux of this whole issue, that there has been a whole slew of problems with respect to this legislation. It's not going to go away overnight. It's not going to just happen with a snap of a finger. It's going to

take some time. We are changing the system substantially. But when you look at the problem with the system now under the old plan, support payors owe nearly \$1 billion in arrears to women and children. Only 23% of cases are in full compliance.

**Mrs Boyd:** Twenty-nine per cent.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for London Centre.

**Mr Tilson:** No payments are being made in almost half of all cases. There's always been a limitation to phone access. There are nearly 50,000 calls a day, only 6% of which were answered in the past. Clients were unable to reach the staff member responsible for their file. This is under the old system that we're changing. A case often travelled through 13 different staff before they became resolved, and 8,000 pieces of mail arrived every day. There's a huge and growing caseload.

You can see from all these facts that we have to change the system, that the system has to be changed. The bill that's before this House, of which particularly the members of the third party are saying they will be supporting or have indicated they're going to support some of the enforcement parts — clearly the system that exists now does not work, and that's why this whole process is being changed. The decentralized system was flawed, and we believe the centralized system is going to alleviate many concerns in this province.

There's a huge and growing caseload. In November 1996 there are 150,000 cases and 1,400 new cases are being added each month. The system has to be changed.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments?

**Mr Sergio:** Does the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale want his two minutes?

**The Acting Speaker:** No. He will be after you.

**Mr Sergio:** I am pleased to take a few minutes and —

**The Acting Speaker:** Is this questions and comments?

**Mr Sergio:** No.

**The Acting Speaker:** Excuse me. There's one more two-minute response, if the member for Oriole would like to take it.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The comment I would make after listening to this debate is that the family support plan is more broken today than it has ever been in its history. That is because in its zeal to cut money from the family support plan and other programs to fund its tax cut this government has placed women and children who are already in a vulnerable and difficult situation in an impossible situation. We all recognize that the family support plan needs to be fixed and repaired and put in a way that will better serve women and their children, because of the delinquency rates we have seen in this province, where some 75% of spouses have walked away from obligations to their children.

However, this government did not move in a thoughtful way to fix the plan. They closed the regional offices, cut \$38 million from the supports, and when they were faced with chaos stood up and said, "There have always been problems with the plan."

1630

The reality is there have always been problems with the plan, but the Harris government exacerbated those



problems, have hurt women and their children, and are standing there today trying to say to people that it's not their fault. I say to them, it is their responsibility and they must be accountable to the women and children and spouses in this province who are not getting the support cheques and to those spouses who are paying those funds and not seeing them directed to their children. They too are angry.

That was not a problem that existed before this government cut the legs out from under the family support plan and didn't move in a thoughtful way to fix it in a way that would see that women and their children got the support they were entitled to and that was needed. For that, they will be blamed, and appropriately blamed.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, you may sum up.

**Mr Hastings:** I appreciate the remarks of the member for London Centre regarding how she analyses the state of the family support plan. She's very knowledgeable on the subject, as I know she operated a facility for women who were battered etc.

I'd just like to reiterate to other comments made by the member for Oriole, who is very good at getting into the game of blaming, I hear often in this House the status quo solution: If you didn't cut, didn't make any changes, everything would be practically fine. The alternative solution then is, if you only increased the amount of staff, you'd be able to solve the problems faster. At the rate of the increase of the numbers per month, heck, you'd have a staff probably of about 20% of the total civil service in the province to solve the problem.

When the member for London Centre made her remarks, it twigged an idea in my mind, that for those families affected by the changes and the transition of the family support plan to the newer administrative arrangement, I will personally be dealing with probably a good number of cases where utilities are about to be turned off, phones reduced or cut off, to see if we can make arrangements for those folks who aren't getting their payments to get the third parties, such as the utilities or Bell Canada or whatever, the landlord, to extend some consideration to these people who are drastically affected, particularly when you get the consent of the people involved to be able to show the data that justify that they do have actual support payments there.

**The Acting Speaker:** Your time is up. Further debate?

**Mr Sergio:** As I was saying before, I'm delighted to join the debate on Bill 82. It's a very important bill. With this introduction, let me say that the government is trying to divert the main focus from the intent of the bill on to legislators and the unaware public, from the very real problem that we have, both as servants of the public and the public that should be receiving that particular service from the family support plan. It is indeed what we have heard, especially in the last few days, a chorus of problems associated with the delivery of service from the family support plan today.

We don't need a new plan with a fancy name; we need, indeed, some services, a system from the government on behalf of the many women and children it is supposed to represent. What we need, indeed, is a Premier, a minister, a government that can understand,

that can grasp the consequences imposed upon the families and children as a result of the changes that Bill 82 entails.

We cannot reach an improved system with less resources. This is an area where we cannot do more with less. In August 1996 the government proposed reform to the family resource centre. Actually, they call it the responsible family office; it should be called the irresponsible government office. What it does is the opposite of what they said they would do to protect and offer assistance and service to the many families.

How can we in all honesty address fairly the content of the bill when it involves cutting two thirds of the staff, when it involves closing all the regional offices around the province, when it involves centralizing all those services into one location — we have heard the horror stories from that office in Downsview — when it involves creating solely a 1-800 number for people across the province to get some assistance and help?

We have a changing of the guard here, we have a change of Speaker, so now we have Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, how can we take this particular proposal seriously when they have created a bureaucratic mess? It takes now up to six, eight weeks of delay trying to get not only some service, some assistance, but an answer from the family support service plan. It's all because of the cuts, because now we have created an overly overloaded system. It is being staffed with inadequate and inefficient staff, if I may say, and I'll tell you why. When I say that, I don't mean to be disrespectful to our staff who are involved. They are on the front line, serving the many clients and the many needs.

This is creating a truly unnecessary burden on families and children. It's creating a lot of unnecessary anxiety, not only to get what they are entitled to, but look at the particular time the situation happens to be in. We are facing a long, cold winter, we are facing the holidays, and I don't have to tell you what children and parents, mothers, go through, especially at this time of the year. I won't go into details as to how a mother feels when she cannot afford to give their kid some of the things that other kids receive during a festive season.

Truly, I call on the Attorney General to concede that the so-called reform of the family support plan is a complete failure and should be stopped, should be halted immediately. Let me tell you why. You have heard horror stories from other members of the House. I just want to give you some of mine that I get on a daily basis, that we receive in my office on a daily basis.

This plight comes from one of my constituents who has been trying since the month of July to get an answer, to get some assistance, to speak to a human voice, to speak to someone at the family support centre. Finally, around 6:45, 7 o'clock one day, he finds this message on his cell phone. It says: "This is the family support plan returning your call. I am sorry I did not reach you. I regret I cannot leave you my name and I do not have a number I can leave either. I hope this matter can be resolved."

Can you believe that? On top of that, to make matters worse, the caller wants to leave the address with my constituent and the caller spells out the province, spells



out Ontario, spells out the address of the family support service.

Can you believe that, Mr Speaker? How would you feel if one of your constituents were to call your office and say, "This is what I've been getting after four months, from July, and I have a very serious particular problem and I want some help, some assistance"? He finally got it, but not until he got frustrated and called the local MPP's office, my office. We were able to serve that constituent and others, but my point and the point of our members here is that this should not be necessary. This should be normal service that our constituents, our taxpayers, the residents of our province should be receiving on a daily basis without delay.

1640

I question whether the Attorney General, in his wildest dreams, could find the most minute hint of customer service in this reply or whether he will just concede that this so-called reform of the family support plan is an abject failure and should be halted. I request that the Attorney General act quickly to address the justifiable concerns of those who must deal daily with the consequences of his ill-fated, ill-timed and poorly planned action. We have heard from the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale that there are some \$905 million in arrears and that by February 1997 this is going to be even bigger, that it's going to be over \$1 billion.

It's not a question of dealing with constructive ways or comments, as the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale said, here from our side. We are. The problem is that the government is not listening. In all honesty, if we have a system that is failing the people of Ontario, mothers and children, why the government would go and make all those cuts, making the system even worse to administer, doesn't make any sense. We find absolutely no common sense in that way. The question is that we're being neither up front nor helpful and, if I may say, and I hope this isn't unparliamentary, we're not being honest with the people of Ontario.

To make that point let me read to you something one of our most-read correspondents, Lorrie Goldstein of the Toronto Sun, says:

"Just what did you think Harris was talking about?"

"To be sure, there are many valid criticisms one can level against the Harris government, but they are based on things the Tories did say they would do.

"They did say (on page 3) that they would protect health care funding, spending on classroom education and priority areas of law enforcement. Well, even supporters like me" — that's Goldstein talking — "are having a hard time understanding exactly what all that means right now.

"For example, when the Tories promised they would not touch 'a penny of health care funding' surely they knew the public would take that as an indication they were not planning a major upheaval such as the mass closing of hospitals."

To be fair, I'm going to finish the sentence. "Well, since the Tories clearly were thinking about closing hospitals, they should have said so. It's not that this is a bad idea — we should have started 20 years ago — the point is the Tories should have been up front.

"Same goes for education reforms. For example, in their pre-election document 'A Blueprint for Learning in Ontario' the Tories promised to address the desperate need for more English as a Second Language teachers in Metro, a need directly created by federal immigration policies. So far they've done nothing." This comes from one of your supporters in the Toronto Sun.

I think the message is quite clear. The message that we are getting and are trying to get across to the government is that the people of Ontario do not want a USA style of government. They do not wish to have US-style policies, a US-made style of social service assistance, or a US-style health system or education system. Neither do people wish to have an Ontario with a US-style society.

So, Mr Premier, stop the persecution, stop the oppression and guide yourself to govern with compassion and dignity and a sense of responsibility. The people of Ontario are not asking for much. They are asking for equality, fairness and justice, and I don't think we should give them any less.

To complete my remarks, I would like to say that the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act is quite irresponsible. What we need is a responsible government to deliver those services that people are entitled to get.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments and questions?

**Mrs Caplan:** I'd like to compliment my colleague Mr Sergio, the member for Yorkview. I think he pointed out in his comments what we are all experiencing in our constituency offices, and that is the enormous frustration of a government approach to the family support program that has resulted in phone calls not being answered, people being unable to get a person to talk to them, women and their children not getting the money they are entitled to, and men who have in good faith seen the dollars flow to the family support office and never get to their ex-wives and their children whom they want to support.

So the frustration that the member for Yorkview spoke so passionately about is something that I think each and every one of us on both sides of the House has experienced. I see some members of the government caucus here as they listen very carefully to what we have to say, and I know they are experiencing the same thing in their own constituency offices.

The reason this happened is because the government was determined to cut, and they were determined to cut for the purpose of funding their tax scheme. As a result, they cut the family support program, which already had problems, they cut the regional offices, they cut the staff, and then they exclaimed that they were surprised that there was no one to answer the phone, that the computers were not up and functioning, that the offices were not only non-functional but dysfunctional. And when the phone calls started in their constituency offices, as my colleague pointed out to them, their response was, "This has been a problem for a long time." Well, as my colleague pointed out and as we all know, they created the problem that exists today and they must stand accountable, and this legislation is not going to fix it.



**Mr Silipo:** I also want to commend the member for Yorkview because, like many others who have stood up here during debate of this piece of legislation and during question period, he has pointed out the experience that he has had first hand with constituents in his own riding, people who are experiencing the breakdown that has occurred in the plan. The reality is — I know members from the government side simply want to pretend that these are not the facts, but this is what's happening — that as a result of the cuts in staffing that the government has put in place in this area, we are seeing that people who were receiving payments before are no longer receiving those payments. You can work it around however you want, but that's the sheer reality. The system is not working because you have broken it. The system isn't functioning. It's not putting into the hands of people who deserve it, people whose money it is, not because of huge systematic problems — those are there. We know that they're there, that those have been there and we can agree some changes need to be made to fix those.

As I said earlier and we will continue to say, we are not standing here saying the system was perfect. It was not and it was not, but the reality is that it is in far worse shape today as a result of the actions of this government than it was before, and the actions of this government were clearly to cut almost 300 staff from the service, people who were providing the flow of that money into the hands largely of women so they could take care of themselves and their children. That isn't happening and the only thing we have as the way to deal with that is to continue to raise these cases one by one as we get to know them.

1650

**Mr Tilson:** The member for Yorkview, as do most of his colleagues, in opposition at least, is trying to give the impression that these problems developed in August and he knows that's not the case. He knows that enforcement of this whole issue of support has been an absolute failure since its inception and it cries out to be changed. In fact, very few of his comments were made with respect to the enforcement part of the bill. Most of his comments had to do with the transition stage, and it's not going to be easy.

As I indicated with respect to the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, as to the problems we've had with respect to this legislation, the original piece of legislation, as you know, was proclaimed in 1987, and prior to the introduction of the SCOE act as many as 85% of the support orders were in some degree of default. In 1988 the caseload was 25,600. In 1992, when the NDP changed the legislation, that caseload became 93,500. The two significant changes of the NDP were the universal application and the automatic deduction for support from wages. That hasn't worked either because in August 1996 there's a caseload of 148,000. It's not working, and that's increasing at 1,400 per month. If we don't do something, if we continue on with the plan you people thought up, it would just become a complete shambles.

So don't blame us for these problems. We're changing the problems. We're going to make the system work. The reason for the bill is that we need more effective tools to target child support and that's what we're going to do.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** The member identified many of the problems that exist at the present time with the plan and of course the reason we have so many of these problems is the government's absolute obsession with cutting absolutely everything. Most people out there I talk to, even those who support the government, believe the government is moving far too quickly and far too drastically and not taking into account the ramifications of its actions.

One of the best examples of this is the family support plan action by the government. They were obsessed with cutting costs so they decided they would close the regional offices. They did not put into place an alternative for those regional offices and so the situation that exists there can only be described as chaotic at the present time. It seems to be a classic case of total incompetence on the part of the government. Things are just out of control in this particular office.

Many of us in the opposition have been standing to ask specific questions in the House and some general questions about matters related to support and custody. The government members no doubt are also getting a large number of telephone calls at their constituency offices. They will say not; I suggest if you went past the members and talked to their staff, you would find out that in fact that is the case. The difference now is it's much more difficult to resolve the problems for them. A second significant difference is that we now have both spouses agreeing that the support and custody office is the problem. Before, it was one spouse fighting with another spouse over matters related to support and custody and payments. Today they are both phoning the office, one saying, "I am paying," the other saying, "I am not receiving, though I know my spouse is paying." That's what this issue is all about. That's why people are concerned.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Yorkview has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Sergio:** Indeed, that is why people are concerned. I would like to thank the members who have taken the time to comment and respond to my brief presentation: the member for Oriole, my colleague from Dovercourt and the members for Dufferin-Peel and St Catharines.

Let me say that we on this side wish absolutely nothing less than a system that would deliver the assistance really that the people need out there, especially at this particular time of the year. There's no question that the system needs some improving, needs some changes, but what we are saying as a constructive argument and not to score points, as the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale said — this is not an issue to play political games. This is not an issue to score political points on. This is very real. It's a very serious issue. The problem we have with it and with the government, if we continue to come back on to that, is because we cannot say that indeed you are going to improve the system when you are proposing to cut two thirds of the staff, you are going to be closing all the regional offices, you are going to be concentrating all the services from one particular office and then tell people that you want to offer that particular service: "You call this 1-800 number."

I gave you previously in my presentation one particular instance where some of my constituents have been calling



and it's just impossible to get a human voice over there. The reality of the matter is that next year we expect still more cuts to the Attorney General's office, something like another \$115 million. How can we say constructively that the proposed changes are going to be doing a better service to those people who expect service from the system?

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Silipo:** I am glad to join this debate, a debate that I have to say I wish were being done in a different context. As we've had occasion to mention more than once, all of us could readily agree that making changes — the minister here calls this the family responsibility act. But making changes to the system that enforces the payment of support between spouses — and, as we know, that means largely from men towards women — is something I think we could all readily agree, as others of my colleagues have traced the history of the system from its introduction in 1987 by the Liberal government to the changes that we made in 1992 and now these changes, is a system that has worked because there was nothing prior to 1987, and a system at the same time that requires some improvements.

There are measures, particularly some of the stricter enforcement measures in this bill, that I personally like and I know that many of our colleagues are quite comfortable with. But when I said I regret the context in which we are having this debate, it's because we know what has been happening in the last number of weeks, in the last number of months particularly, as a result of changes that were made by this government and the current Attorney General to the system and to the plan.

We know we had a system that was collecting payments from spouses and then turning that money over to the spouses as required by law. Then the government comes in and, as part of its cost-cutting schemes, decides that in this area, just as in many other areas, they have to make cuts. Why? They like to say because they want to make the system more efficient. They use the fact that there was a greater caseload in 1995 than there was in 1992 as somehow being something that was bad rather than seeing it as a great example of the fact that the system was working, that we had more people on the system as a result of actions we took as a government to ensure that women who were owed money from their spouses were getting that money.

The way to do that was by having a system that provided for the automatic deduction of those payments. Yes, that increased the caseload. That was the point. That's exactly the point. That's how you go about ensuring that people who are owed money so they can take care of themselves and their children get that from their spouses: by having a system in place that provides for those payments to be made indirectly. That's a point I want to come back to because it's significant.

1700

We're seeing here in this bill one of the things we don't like: the departure from the basic principle that payments made indirectly into the plan and then from the plan to the spouse to whom those funds were owing. I reiterate this point: The fact that there has been in the period from 1992 to 1995 an increase in the caseload is

an indication that the plan was doing what it was supposed to do: to get money from one spouse who was required by law to pay it to the other spouse, and we'll continue to repeat that it's largely from men to women so they can take care of themselves and their children.

I would think that's a system we want to uphold, that we want to make sure that basic premise of it is not only upheld, but if it can be expanded we ought to expand that. Why? Because when you have that system in place it means you don't have spouses using the question of the payment of support as a reason for an ongoing fight or dispute between them.

I raise this issue as someone who, before coming to this House, did a little bit of work as a lawyer in the area of family law. I want to tell you that one of the most troubling things I found in that area was how it was more common than uncommon that spouses decided to use questions of custody, support and support payments as a way to continue the dispute and the fight between them. It was one of the things I found most difficult to deal with as a lawyer. One of the points, one of the basic tenets behind this plan was to try to remove that part of it, to say that both parents, to the extent that they were determined in law, had an obligation to their children regardless of whatever issues led to the breakup in the family, that when it came to support there had to be in place a mechanism that took the dispute out to the side, that said regardless of what happened, regardless of the history, regardless of what led to the family breakdown and separation or divorce, as the case might be, there was an obligation to ensure that children in particular continue to be supported financially. That continues and needs to continue to be an obligation parents have.

There was a basic element in the plan that is important to maintain and expand. When we look at this legislation, and as my colleague the member for London Centre and my colleague for Sudbury East earlier on have outlined, one area that troubles us in this legislation is the opting-out provisions. One of the things this will do is to revert back into the system only those cases that continue to be problematic. I recall the member for London Centre making the point very explicitly the other day that this, among other things, will be a problem not just for the people receiving the funds but for the people making the payments, because it now becomes a tool the employer is able to use against that person as an employee.

I say to my colleagues across that if they are really serious about having a plan that actually protects people and at the same time tries to reduce — not increase but reduce — the amount of confusion and conflict, they ought to look very seriously at that particular piece in the legislation and move away from that.

I want to say, coming back to the basic point, that we have in place a system that has been largely working, a system that has been providing for the gathering of the funds and the distribution of the funds in a sensible way. Yes, there have been problems, yes, there continue to be problems, but the system has been functioning. The amount of money collected has steadily gone up and the amount of money paid out has steadily gone up. We can use numbers here all we want, but that's the sheer reality. When you strip it down, when you bring it down to its



basic tenets, that's what's left: The system was working and it incrementally increased the number of people who were able to get the payments they were owed and to therefore be able to take care of themselves and their children.

I want to just say on that point again that when the government members said they wanted a system in place, in many areas where government is involved or not involved, that they wanted to help create a society in which people are able to take care of themselves, here's a case in point. Here's a system that actually has been working. Here's a system that actually has been providing a way in which people can take care of themselves and their families.

Then what do we see? We see the government coming in and saying, "It's time to cut, folks." In this case, 290 staff cut from the plan, eight regional offices closed. What happens? We begin to see the system breaking down. We begin to see the system no longer able to do what it was set up to do.

The member for Dufferin-Peel has on more than one occasion today talked about this increase in caseload. You would think that if there were a real concern that somehow the increase in caseload was a problem, the last thing you would see is the government and the minister moving in to cut the staff who are running that program. You want to make changes, you want to make improvements? Absolutely. But you don't get rid of 290 experienced staff, people who know how the system works, who know what has to be done. You don't shut down eight regional offices, throw the whole system into chaos and leave people in the position where the only way they can get any action, the only way they can get money owing to them, money that is largely still being paid into the system but that they can't get out of the system, the only thing you leave them is to go to their MPPs.

Even when people call up the plan, there's nobody there to answer the phones. When people look for the files, the files are no longer there. They're in boxes. They're sealed off in offices somewhere where no one can get to them. This is the kind of chaos, this is the kind of turmoil this government is causing.

The worst of it is that it's not even necessary. This is not a situation in which you have a problem the solution to which is to shut the system down. You want to make improvements? You don't need to create this phantom crisis to make improvements. Bring a piece of legislation forward, make the arguments about what improvements you want to make and let's get on with the discussion, but don't destroy the system in the meantime, don't destroy the parts of the system that have been working. That's what we have seen here. That's what we are seeing and those are the stories we are telling on a day-to-day basis in this Legislature.

Quite frankly, the only thing the Attorney General and the Premier have left us in the opposition benches on this one is to continue to stand up day after day, as the minister responsible for women's issues invited us to do some time ago, and bring the cases here on the floor of the Legislature.

That's not the way it should be. This should not be a body that has to resort to dealing with case work, as

important as that is, as crucial as that is for the lives it touches. There should be a system in place that allows those individual problems to be resolved, that allows, yes, through MPPs' offices where necessary, us or our staff to pick up the phone, to call the requisite office and to get the changes and the actions necessary to resolve the cases. But that isn't happening and the reason it's not happening is because this minister and this government have basically disembowelled the system. They have gotten rid of the most experienced staff. We are seeing now that the nameless and the faceless bureaucrats that this government so likes to attack are actually people providing service.

I hope that people across this province are beginning to take note that when we approach a problem by saying, "We're spending too much money here. Let's just cut. We have too many bureaucrats. Let's just cut a few hundred, a few thousand" — many thousands, as this government is going to do — now we see what that means in a real way, in a practical way.

1710

What it means in this case is that people who are owed money are not getting it. People who pay funds into the system so that their children are able to be brought up are not seeing that money go towards the upbringing of their children. That's something that this government, no matter how you explain it, is just not able to sell your line on. There is just no way you can get out of it.

I have to say I'm surprised, as I see the Attorney General stand up day after day and try to defend his position on this. He likes to talk about the improvements he has made. I heard him talk the other day about the 70 or so additional staff that he has now brought back into the system, realizing the fact that he laid off 290 staff has caused the havoc that it has caused. But I still don't hear him admitting it. I still don't hear him saying clearly: "You know, on this one at least, we made a mistake. On this one, we quite frankly screwed up."

He doesn't have the courage to say that. The Premier doesn't have the courage to say that. They don't have the courage to admit that here the crisis that they wanted to invent has turned out to be a real one, but one of their own making, one which has resulted in the destruction of a system that was by and large working, a system that was putting money into the hands of people who needed it, deserved it and to whom it was owing, a system that they now have to be accountable for and have to be responsible for.

You know, this surprises me. It surprises me to see this Attorney General particularly involved in this, not just because of his attacks on us when we were in government and his trying to get us to do more and more to improve the system, but because, having worked with him in the past, I'm surprised that he would agree to the kind of destruction of the system we have seen. I don't usually get personal about these things, but I find it very, very surprising and somewhat troubling to see this Attorney General having agreed to these kinds of staffing cuts, because I'm sure he would have had some realization of what this would have done.

Perhaps he didn't, in which case I think it would be incumbent upon him, upon the Premier, to clearly admit



that on this one they messed up and that what they need to do is to reinstate the changes that they've made, reinstate the staff, get the system back up on its feet and running and not continue to scramble around as they have been doing.

But I have to say I don't expect that to happen, because when I look at the approach that has been taken here, I see that it's not atypical of what this government is doing. In fact we know that inventing crisis has become the way in which this government operates. We heard from the expert in the government, the Minister of Education, who talked about the need to invent a crisis in education, and he's done it; he's done it in spades.

He's done it in spades in terms of the cuts to the classroom. Remember the promise, "No cuts to the classroom"? Well, you try to find one classroom across this province that hasn't been affected by the cuts, and double that in terms of the cuts that are yet to come. We will see that the Minister of Education was correct in only one thing, in saying that he was going to help create a crisis in education, that this was the only way to make change, in his view, and that's what's happening.

We see it perhaps on a smaller scale, but I think just as importantly, in what is going on now through the discussion around the future of the greater Toronto area. We see the Minister of Municipal Affairs putting out — not even putting out a report; I was going to say putting out a report, but that's the point, there has not been a report — just putting out rumours about doing away with the local municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto, not even having the decency to put together an official position that says, "This is what we're going to do," completely ignoring that we are dealing here with a quarter of the population of the province and just causing all sorts of havoc as people now are scrambling, trying to come up with all sorts of ideas and models to fit into some crazy time line that they are involved in.

The point is this: This government it seems has become expert at creating a crisis, at creating a situation in which the only way they feel they can bring about change is by breaking down completely that which exists already, whether it's in education, whether it's in questions of governance in municipal affairs, whether it's in health care: "Just break it all down. Then we will be able to tell people that there's a crisis, that it's all broken, and we will come in and be the saviours."

I think people are beginning to see through that, are beginning to understand that you don't make change by completely destroying all the good that is there in the name of making change. That kind of concept that comes, I think, from the sense of revolution they want to bring about will only bring about chaos, will only bring about confusion, will only bring about hurt and will only bring about pain. That's what's happening here as we see hundreds, if not thousands of families who were receiving payments now no longer receiving those payments.

I know it pains the members across to continue to hear us say that, but we are going to continue to make that point because it's important that they understand it, and it's important we feel that the people across the province understand that what the Mike Harris revolution is all about is breaking down everything in this province,

breaking down all that has been working, and that even when there is a situation in which money is being paid for the support of women and children — not government funding but private funding — somehow they've got to destroy that, they've got to tear that apart in order to bring in their new scheme which will allow them over the course of a couple of years to be able to say that somehow they've reduced the caseload.

It's not in reducing the caseload that you deal with the problem here, because the problem here is not how many hundreds or how many thousands of cases you have on the system; the problem here is making sure that people who are owed money as a result of support orders get those funds. The system that exists now ensures those payments can be made by removing the parties from the conflictual situation they've been in and by making an indirect payment that ensures money flows from those who are responsible to pay it to those to whom it's owing.

I would think that's the kind of situation this government would want to see if they truly believe in having people able to take care of themselves and their families, but it kind of makes you wonder if that's really what they want or if what they want is a situation in which there is in fact more dependence.

They'll be able, as has been mentioned already, over the next couple of years to say, "We've reduced the caseload," but how will they have done that? They will have done that by having people opt out of the system. They will have done that by leaving to the discretion of the director, not just what he or she can enforce but also the ability to write off arrears. It'll be interesting to see those numbers over the next few years in terms of how much money has been written off. I'll look forward to seeing that report a couple of years from now, because it will show us that millions of dollars will have to have been written off for this government to even have an inkling of an ability to come forward and say, "Now we've made the system better."

1720

Here you have a situation in which what are needed are, yes, perhaps some tougher enforcement mechanisms to be put in place. I think we would all agree that in this particular case, perhaps above all types of situations where money is owing, we need to put in place the most stringent regulations we can to ensure that people are living up to their obligations to support particularly their children. I think there would have been ready agreement across this House for any measures that would have added to the strength of the plan, to the strength of the system, in being able to enforce those provisions.

The kind of situation that's been created, the kind of crisis that's been created that has resulted in thousands of people no longer receiving the money they were receiving before, because the system, at least to that extent, was working, is something this government needs to be accountable for, needs to answer to and that we will continue to hold it accountable to.

The other comment we need to make is to remind people why all this is happening. It certainly isn't happening, as we've been saying, because the government wants to make the system more efficient. If that were



their purpose they could have brought in the legislation, they could have brought in other changes to make the system more efficient; they didn't have to cut the system, they didn't have to cut the staff. The reason, of course, the 290 staff and all the chaos that's ensued have taken place is because that was part of the Attorney General's contribution to the deficit cutting.

Why is the deficit cutting uppermost in the mind of this government? They say it's because they want to create jobs, jobs that we aren't seeing. We know, and people across the province are realizing more and more, that it's because they need to find the \$5 billion annually and the \$20 billion over the course of the term to fund the tax cut; to fund a tax cut that's not going to, by and large, help those families that are affected by this plan but is going to benefit only the wealthiest citizens in this province; to fund a tax cut that will mean only higher taxes for the average family across the province and will mean, yes, lower taxes for the wealthiest citizens in the province.

The worst of it is that for them to find that money, which they have to go and borrow, I remind people — these are the people who believe in reducing the deficit, and they're borrowing money to pay for this tax cut that is going to result in higher taxes for the average citizen when they factor in local taxes, increased fees at colleges and universities, increased fees for medicines for seniors — all those additional costs will mean that at the end of the day the average family will be worse off, the overall debt of the province will be higher and service after service will be gone from this province.

In education we are seeing cuts to our classrooms, higher class sizes, fewer teachers rather than more teachers, even though there are more students year after year in our schools. In post-secondary we are seeing students having to pay 20% more.

We are seeing seniors having to pay for their medicines. We are seeing hospitals being closed. We are seeing cuts to the whole health care system. We are seeing service after service disappearing. We are seeing the face of this province completely changed.

We are seeing the crisis approach being spread throughout the province by this government. We are seeing the Mike Harris world. We are seeing what the Mike Harris revolution is all about.

What it means at the end of the day, in sheer, simple terms, is that the small part of our population which is very wealthy will be better off and the rest of us will be worse off than we are today. That's the Mike Harris revolution.

Coming back to the family responsibility act in particular, we will see here in this area, as we have seen for the last number of months, people who are entitled to receive money from their spouses not able to get those funds. Why? Because the system has been shut down, because the staff that were providing those services are no longer there, because when calls are made to try to find the files of those people, they are told that those files are locked up in offices that have yet to be opened.

People find out that the information that they need isn't there, isn't available, the staff isn't there to be able to do the work that they have to do and people are not

getting the money that they are entitled to. As a result of that, people are in danger of losing their homes, people are not able to put food on the table, people are having all sorts of stresses, all sorts of pain that they are being put through, and that's something this government needs to continue to answer to.

They can pretend as they stand here that this legislation is going to solve everything. It will make some improvements, there is no doubt, but nothing short of reinstating the staff in those positions will ensure that the system begins to function again. What we need are not more cuts. What we need is a system that allows people to take care of themselves and their children. Here, the family support plan was doing that. The family support plan was providing a vehicle through which parents were able to carry out their responsibility towards their children.

The actions of the Premier, the actions of the Attorney General, the actions of the government caucus, the actions of the Tory government have caused havoc in that system, have meant that people who are entitled to get those funds are no longer getting them. The children who are entitled to get those payments through their parents are no longer getting them. I know it's going to tire members across to hear us repeat that tune, but that tune we will continue to repeat because it's important they understand that they are causing this pain, that they are causing this havoc, that they are putting people in jeopardy and that they are responsible for that hurt they have created across the province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments or questions?

**Mr Tilson:** The member for Dovercourt, like his colleagues, has indicated, why are we doing this? The reason we're doing this is that we're getting 8,000 pieces of mail a day, we're getting 50,000 telephone calls a day. The member for Dovercourt is suggesting, why don't we hire more staff? Quite frankly, with that increasing amount, no amount of increased staff would solve that tremendous amount of mail, the tremendous number of telephone calls that are coming in each day, of which only 6% — and this is under your system, this isn't under our system — of those 50,000 telephone calls a day were being answered. So the system clearly didn't work.

What we need in this province is more effective tools to target child support defaulters. What we need are better tools to target self-employed payors. What we need are better mechanisms to uncover situations where payors are hiding assets and income. What we need is a better use of technology, for example, phone systems that can deal with these 50,000 calls a day, which are increasing. What we need is direct access to multiskilled staff with more enforcement powers. That's what we need in this province.

We can't continue on with the process that was initiated back in 1987 and which has gone through the member for Dovercourt's government to the present time, because this system clearly has become so overburdened that it's sinking; in fact it's sunk. We've had to completely reform the system. Yes, there are some difficulties that are occurring now. We will solve those problems and we will put forward a bill that will have enforcement that we believe will assist the women and children of this prov-



ince in recovering the badly needed funds and resources they need to maintain their lives.

1730

**Mr Bradley:** I appreciate the previous member's speech on this, the member for Dovercourt, because he outlined some of the background of why we're in this circumstance today. He put it in a general context and I, if I get the opportunity to speak later on today, will do the same.

I think he was very wise in pointing out that all of this is driven by the obsession of this government with a very unwise tax scheme, a tax scheme which is going to deliver the most money to the very richest people in our society at the expense of those who need government services, the most disadvantaged, the poorest people in our society.

I'm glad he pointed out, because a lot of people still don't recognize this, that the government is going to have to borrow the money to give a tax cut because we're running a deficit now, so if you don't have the money now to give the tax cut, that means you have to borrow more money or make even more drastic cuts in government expenditures.

I know it sounds good to the crowd who supported this government. I know it sounds good when you get up at the fund-raiser — and I see there was another sop to the friends of the government today, the developers were given an early Christmas present — but I know when you get at the fund-raiser they like this, except it has an effect on people, in this case very vulnerable people in our society. Those of us who have monitored what's going on in our constituency offices know that some of the most bitter confrontations are between ex-spouses over the issue of family support. One thing this government has been able to do is unite both those spouses in their annoyance with this government and their desperate annoyance with a government that has made a problem far worse with its obsession to cut the regional offices and to centralize.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I just want to make a couple of comments. I continue to be amazed in this assembly at the way in which the government, rather than fessing up that there was a problem with the family services plan and the way in which it was functioning, attempts to blame previous governments for their problems.

I'd have a lot more respect for the Attorney General and the member for Dufferin-Peel if they'd say: "Yeah, we screwed up big time. We laid off 290 people and closed eight regional offices and shipped all the files to Downsview and they're sitting there in cardboard boxes and we wonder why there's a buildup." I'd have a lot more respect for the government if they would admit what they've done and admit that it was causing a serious problem and they would address it, if they really would honestly address it, but I suspect the real problem is they've decided that the best defence is a good offence. The trouble is, it's not a very good offence.

There are very few people out there in the province who don't understand what's causing the problem here. It was simply that the Attorney General was given his marching orders on reducing his budget by so many

dollars and he had to make some tough decisions — we all know what that's like — and he made the wrong decision. He decided that he was going to close the regional offices and lay off 290 people. There's nothing complicated about it.

But what I find so offensive — and you'll notice that every time the Attorney General speaks in the Legislature, the temperature in this chamber rises by about 20 degrees because he's not dealing in a straightforward and honest way with the issue, and that's what makes the opposition members very angry at the way he's dealing with the problem. The member for Dufferin-Peel is doing the same thing. It's nobody else's problem; it's yours. You caused it; you solve it.

**Mr Hastings:** It's interesting to listen to the members opposite about if we'd only fess up and admit that it's only our problem. I think the reality is around here that there are certain problems we're encountering with the transition phase and we're going to overcome them in time, but their solution is the traditional status quo: "If you'd only hire" — I think I mentioned this ratio before — "about one to one, so every new case would get a new worker and eventually you'd have it all solved."

I guess of the whole society — you know, it sounds so absurd that if you applied their logical thinking coming on to this, you'd have a one-on-one ratio so the total number of divorces in Ontario would have to be equal to the total number of workers. That's not what they're suggesting, they say, but on the other hand, they like to talk about the point that this was done to finance a tax cut. I guess the reverse logic of that would be that if we only increased the amount of money on everything, increased the number of people handling these cases on this item and borrowed more money for everything else, there would be no problem. We'd have the traditional status-quo-hugger solution to everything that they have over there.

I admired the member for Ottawa South, Mr McGuinty, who introduced a bill today that indicated that at least there's one member in the gliberal opposition party who is thinking finally and introduced a bill dealing with alternative energy sources. It's too bad some of the other members wouldn't look at his leadership in terms of trying to deal with the realities. He's struggling with them. But over there we always get the traditional non-dialogue: "Just spend more money."

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Dovercourt has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Silipo:** In summing up, it's clear that just in this short exchange the real division that exists in this House is so evident. Again, I thought I said relatively clearly that we've recognized there are areas in this plan that need to be improved. We're not quibbling with that. We have some problems with some of the provisions of the legislation, but I continue to make the point that if the government were serious about making the changes, they could have brought the bill forward and made the changes. They didn't have to decimate the system in the meantime.

To the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale I say we're not talking about increasing staffing here. We're complaining about the 290 staff you laid off —



**Ms Martel:** The 40% cuts.

**Mr Silipo:** — the 40% of the staff you cut from the system. That's what's causing the problems. That's what's resulting in the situation we have now, that women who were getting payments before are not now getting them. People who were getting payments that they were entitled to before are no longer receiving those cheques. That's directly as a result of the 40% in staff cuts that you have brought about.

As my colleague has mentioned, the one thing we have a right to expect when that happens is that you have at least the decency to admit that that was something that was wrong and that you'll take steps to fix it. Don't put us, and more importantly don't put those women and children, in the position where we have to bring their cases to the floor of the Legislature as the only vehicle left for you to do anything about it. That's a crazy way to run the province. It's an even crazier way to run people's lives.

I want to say to my colleagues across, if they're serious about making improvements to the plan, yes, we'll deal with this legislation, but deal also with the chaos that your staffing cuts have caused to the system and, more importantly, to the women and children in the system.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** I wish I didn't have to speak on a bill of this kind. I wish it would be the kind of bill that would satisfy all members of the House and could be proceeded with quickly. But there are so many problems with the family support plan in the province today that our constituents are asking that we bring them to the attention of the Legislature.

I suspect, on a very non-partisan basis, that if one were to talk to the constituency assistants — not to the members who have been given their marching orders by the Premier's office and who want to get into the cabinet, not that group, but the people who are actually on the front lines in the constituency offices — they would tell you how chaotic the system is today.

Let's look at why it happened. It happened because the government was obsessed with making drastic cuts very quickly and without looking at the consequences. If you're going to change things of that nature, there may be a debate in the House about the advisability of centralizing as opposed to regional offices. I happen to think it was an advantage to have the regional offices because people could then visit those offices in person and actually speak to another person and try to resolve a problem. But putting that aside — and it's very difficult to put that aside because I don't agree with that move. But even if you had as a government prepared for this change — you talk about a transition period. If you want to know what the government members have been told to say, you listen to the jargon. It's a "transition period." That's what they've been told. That's on the sheets that governments give out to their members. All governments do it, I assure you. It's not just this government that does it. Government members are given the sheets and told the line that the government is giving.

The fact is, this is chaotic. The fact is that it's reflecting total incompetence in dealing with this specific issue,

and the consequences are the greatest for some of the most vulnerable people in our society — that is usually women in this case, but spouses who are looking after the children and require financial support to be able to do so. 1740

I remember discussing this problem with the Attorney General of the day when the Family Law Reform Act was before the Legislature in 1977. I remember asking on that occasion, "Wouldn't it be wise for government to set up a program where not the taxpayer at large but those responsible for the children will be held accountable?" I remember a response coming at the time, I won't say from whom — let's say the government in general — that "It will cost you too much to be chasing these people." Indeed, it isn't a cheap process, I think anybody knows, but in the long run it saves the government money. If that's the bottom line, it saves the government money because the taxpayers are then not supporting these children. Instead, it is those who are responsible for those children who must financially support them.

Any program of this kind is going to be complicated. Everyone recognizes that. I don't want to pretend there's a simplistic answer or a simple answer to it; there isn't. But I think the action the government has taken to simply shut the doors of the regional offices, lay off hundreds of people and then expect that somehow the problem's going to be resolved was foolish, ill-considered and reflects upon the government badly in terms of mismanagement.

I get from my constituency office each day — I just went through some of the files today. They're not all family support, but I can remember when perhaps the Workers' Compensation Board represented the largest number of calls. Today by far the plurality — if not the majority of calls, the largest plurality — is on family support problems.

As I mentioned in my remarks earlier, one thing this government has been successful in doing is indeed bringing two spouses together, because they're both angry. That's reflected in many of the comments I'm getting through here. I'm going to read some of them without mentioning names. You always have to be careful in the House that you don't, so I'll use Mrs X and Mr Y in each one of the cases and I'll try not to personalize except that I want to show you the kinds of problems that are existing.

Here is a woman who has not received a support payment since September 9. She has called family support on two occasions, and on one of these occasions spoke to a person who told this woman that the money had been received at the family support office and would be deposited into her account. This has not happened. This woman cannot understand why it is taking so long for family support to send the money if it has already been sent to them. So we make an inquiry in that regard and try to resolve the problem, but again it's not easily resolved because it's difficult to get through to anybody except by fax.

Here's another individual. He was laid off a few months ago. It's been difficult to find another job, so he went to court to have his family support payments reduced. As of November 1, he was supposed to be



paying \$150 every two weeks, or \$300 a month. He's found out through a UIC telemessage that they've deducted \$266 off his first cheque this month already. In other words, he's gone through the process, he's had different circumstances — I won't get into the minute detail — but again it's not being reflected by the family support office. It's taking so long and there isn't a regional office to deal with.

Here's a person whose ex-wife is waiting for support money which has been deducted from this person's paycheques. Mr Y works for a government agency and over \$1,000 is deducted each month from his cheques to pay for support. His ex-wife is now owed \$2,500. So you can see what's happening: The money is going into the system but it's not getting to the people who need it. The Attorney General gets up each day when he has questions addressed to him and states that somehow the problem is solved because they're paying out so much money.

Here's an individual who is concerned that no one ever gets back to you from the family support plan. This is not because the people who work there are miserable; it's because they're so overworked because the government was obsessed with cutting the number of people working there. It looks good when you go to the fund-raiser and say, "Look how many people we've cut."

He has tried accessing the family support plan, even doing so at 2 am one morning, and still it was the same recording on the phone. No response to that either. He has a court order and yet the employer is still taking substantial amounts off his income. They're demanding credit he thought he had coming to him for child support.

In other words, time and again with these cases — it's difficult to get into the detail of them, but here's one that's rather revealing, that I think will be helpful to members, because this person watches the Legislature.

This woman — I'll call her Mrs X — called again. She called back in mid-October and I did send a fax, says my assistant, to the family support plan. Of course there's been no response either to Mrs X or to me, so that is what I had to tell the woman. She let me know again that her husband is not a deadbeat dad. He has often shown her the pay stubs of the money coming off his cheque. She has just received a cheque for \$25, which she called before, and which — she received three like that. She said her husband is not in arrears, which is what family support told her when she did get through to them once.

This woman has been using e-mail and the Internet to get through to the Attorney General's office and she's also watched Charles Harnick when he's been replying to opposition members asking questions about family support. She said it just annoys her so much to see Harnick stand there, beat about the bush and then say that as soon as they get the money, it goes right to the client. It does not and we all know that.

It goes on and on. I could go through many of these cases, and these are calls that come into the constituency office. These aren't people who are normally calling the constituency office to complain; they have a specific problem and they would like their members of the Legislature to help in resolving it. Why is that? Because they're unable to resolve it through the family support

plan office itself, the support and custody office, and that is the problem.

Michele Landsberg on the weekend, in the November 23 edition of the *Toronto Star*, mentioned some problems. She says, "Tory Clowns Have Bungled Support Plan." There are days when I agree with Michele Landsberg and there are days when I don't agree. She mentioned only New Democrats who had raised this in the House. I'm sure the only reason Michele mentioned New Democrats is she just wasn't aware of all the Liberals who had risen in the House to raise these issues. She just wasn't aware of that, I know, because being fair-minded, I know Ms Landsberg would have mentioned that.

#### *Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Would the members come to order, please, particularly the members for Durham Centre and Etobicoke-Humber.

**Mr Bradley:** One thing I think there would be consensus on is that the real problem with this support and custody office is the problem with this whole government. If you ask people out there, even supporters — I have friends who are Conservatives; I have lots of friends who are Conservatives, many of whom even today admit they voted Conservative last election. I certainly compliment them when they do that.

When I say, "So what do you think of the government, what do you think about the present Harris regime?" they say, "It's far more like the Reform Party than the old Conservative Party I knew." They say, "The old Conservative Party was very practical, very open-minded, yes, it was Conservative enough to satisfy me, but boy, when I look at this crowd they look more like the Reform Party or the revolutionaries from south of the border." I have to agree with them.

The second thing they say is, "Even though they're my party and my government and I supported them, they're moving too quickly, they're moving very drastically, they're not examining the consequences." That's why we're on this bill. That's why there's a problem with the family support office. The government is obsessed with this revolutionary program it has. Now they're asking me — these are some of the people who thought maybe a tax cut was a good idea. Everybody likes it; I mean, I benefit from a tax cut personally. But they're now saying to me: "You know, I would like to have government services preserved. I want them to be efficient. I certainly want the government to examine every program and every department to see where efficiencies can be found, but I don't want the government to blindly head into a new direction to simply chop employees from various government offices, such as the support and custody office, and then reap the consequences we see now." Those are really consequences for vulnerable people in our society, women, largely, and children of those women, who are not receiving the support payments to which they are entitled according to this plan.

#### **1750**

Now, does this bill have some merit? It certainly does. Many sections of the bill are going to receive the support of those of us in the opposition. We believe that the bill can be of benefit. We think there should be public hearings because we know there are a lot of people, both



men and women, who would like to have something to say about the whole system and how this legislation may help or hinder that system. But when it comes down to it they will recognize that the reason we're seeing the acute problems — not the chronic problems — with this plan is because the government is obsessed with giving a huge tax break to the richest people in our society, because they are the people who will benefit the most.

The people who are earning over \$200,000 will have back in their hands the most money of anybody. The person at the bottom end of the economic ladder is not going to get the most cash back; people such as bank presidents — and they may be nice people, I don't know — corporate heads and others who make hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars, are going to get the money back. I even thought maybe Conrad Black, if he pays taxes in this province, will benefit by this. I'm sure eventually that will be reflected in the editorial opinion of all the newspapers he happens to own.

I see today — the Speaker will be interested in this because he's interested in how this issue will be covered in the press and how the press will receive it — there's the annual dinner of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto, and Conrad Black, PC, QC — "PC" is probably right; it says I think "QC" — will be the special guest. It says, "Conrad Black controls or influences more than 500 newspapers in Canada, the US, the UK, Australia, Israel and the Cayman Islands, with a combined circulation of more than 13 million." So indeed he's powerful, and I wonder how he is going to —

**The Speaker:** It's kind of interesting. I'm going to find it very interesting how you tie that back to Bill 82, the bill that we're debating today.

**Mr Bradley:** If our society is to see a fair coverage of this issue we will have to see it from many different viewpoints. If Conrad Black imposes his viewpoint, then how can it be balanced?

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** Conrad Black and Michele Landsberg. I like that influence.

**Mr Bradley:** I know the member for Norfolk agrees with me. How could it possibly be balanced if only Conrad Black owns all these newspapers? But I digress and I don't want to digress, because we're dealing with a serious problem, and overall the problem is this obsession with the tax cut.

I talk to people and I'm sure, Mr Speaker, you're the same in your riding. When you run into people in the street they must ask you the question, "Why on earth would a Conservative government that believes the deficit is a problem, and I think everybody agrees with that, borrow more money to give me a tax break, and why would that government put itself in a position of then having to cut even more from essential services such as the family support plan in Ontario?" You've got them flabbergasted out there.

I was in a discussion with some very conservative-minded economists in an establishment in St Catharines just last Friday. All of them were lamenting the fact that a government they thought would be good for the province was embarking upon a bizarre tax scheme which would have dire consequences for so many in our society.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** The Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation interjects, and I say to her that if we were not embarked upon this —

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** Who said that? I didn't.

**Mr Bradley:** Well, I saw her lips moving anyway. I say to her that if it were not for this tax scheme, she would have enough money in her department that she would be able to provide appropriate funding for recreational purposes in this province and she would not have to have her parliamentary assistant, the member for Brampton North, bad-mouthing that society, calling the people involved with recreation and sports in this province welfare bums or something.

Now I know that will go over well with the Premier's office. I know the member for Brampton North sees himself — South. I'm sorry. I apologize to the member for Brampton North. The member for Brampton South sees himself as a rising star in the government, and indeed when I want to know what the Premier's minions are thinking, I listen to the member for Brampton South, because he can tell me exactly what the Premier wants to hear. With others, though, that's not always the case. The member for Grey-Owen Sound — that's not always what the Premier's saying. My friend the member for Sarnia the other day — I sent the headline over to the Premier; I don't have it any more. It says, "Boushy Denounces Health Minister," or something like that. I thought that was quite reasonable. I'm glad to see members of the back bench speaking up. They don't have the power that the Premier's advisers have.

With regard to Bill 82, it's my view that some of the measures in here are good, and I want to say that to the parliamentary assistant, who I think should be in the cabinet, by the way, rather than some of them. I won't get into that, but I think he's a capable person. When I look some days across the floor and I don't see him in the cabinet and I see others performing, I wonder how that can be the case. But I want to say to the parliamentary assistant that some of the measures contained in this legislation are going to be helpful.

I hope this bill will pass. I hope it will be modified appropriately from time to time when it goes before committee when good suggestions are made about its contents. But the problem that exists cannot be solved by this legislation alone. It must be solved by the government admitting that it made a mistake. I believe the government should reopen regional offices and deal with people on a face-to-face basis. I believe it should put the appropriate staff in there. I think that will be most helpful to the disadvantaged people, to the vulnerable people, the children and the women of this province who are the recipients of these payments to look after the children of broken marriages. I think if the government were to admit that and re-establish those offices and put the necessary resources in, many of the problems would be reduced; never eliminated, but reduced.

**The Speaker:** It now being almost 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned till 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1758.*



# CONTENTS

Monday 25 November 1996

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Lois Dubois</b>	
Mr Bartolucci	5297
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Ms Martel	5297
<b>Cardiopulmonary resuscitation</b>	
Mrs Johns	5297
<b>Highway inspectors</b>	
Mr Colle	5297
<b>Skiing in Sault Ste Marie</b>	
Mr Martin	5298
<b>Lindsay Boys and Girls Club</b>	
Mr Stewart	5298
<b>Private members' public business</b>	
Mrs Pupatello	5298
<b>Employment equity</b>	
Mr Marchese	5298
<b>University of Toronto</b>	
Mr Young	5299

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Development charges</b>	
Mr Leach	5299
Mr Gerretsen	5300
Mr Marchese	5301

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Government advertising</b>	
Mr McGuinty	5302
Mr Snobelen	5302
<b>Ontario Correctional Institute</b>	
Mr McGuinty	5303
Mr Runciman	5303
<b>Ipperwash Provincial Park</b>	
Mr Hampton	5303
Mr Runciman	5303
Mr Phillips	5305
Mr Harris	5305
<b>Labour relations</b>	
Mr Hampton	5304
Mrs Witmer	5304
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Ms Lankin	5306
Mr Harnick	5306, 5308
Ms Martel	5306
Mr Agostino	5308
<b>Workers' compensation</b>	
Mr Arnott	5306
Mrs Witmer	5307
<b>Rent regulation</b>	
Mr Curling	5307
Mr Leach	5307, 5308
Mr Marchese	5307
<b>Sales tax harmonization</b>	
Mr Wettlaufer	5308
Mr Eves	5308

## Parent-school association

Ms Churley	5309
Mr Leach	5309
<b>Ontario Federation of Agriculture</b>	
Mr Barrett	5310
Mr Villeneuve	5310
<b>Health care funding</b>	
Mrs Caplan	5310
Mr Wilson	5310

## PETITIONS

<b>North York Branson Hospital</b>	
Mr Kwinter	5311
<b>Occupational health and safety</b>	
Mr Christopherson	5311, 5312
Mr Martin	5311
<b>Public libraries</b>	
Mr Danford	5311
Mr Grimmett	5313
<b>Liquor Control Board of Ontario</b>	
Mr Bradley	5311
<b>Education</b>	
Mr Grimmett	5312
<b>Rent regulation</b>	
Mr Sergio	5312
Mr Curling	5313
<b>Tax reduction</b>	
Mr Marchese	5312
<b>Snowmobile registration</b>	
Mr O'Toole	5312
<b>School bus safety</b>	
Mr Hoy	5312
<b>Sale of ammunition</b>	
Mr Murdoch	5313
<b>Hospital restructuring</b>	
Mr Bartolucci	5313
<b>Child care</b>	
Mr Martin	5313

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on estimates</b>	
Mr Curling	5314

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Alternative Fuels Act, 1996, Bill 97,</b>	
Mr McGuinty	
Mr McGuinty	5314
Agreed to	5314
<b>Windsor Utilities Commission Act,</b>	
1996, Bill Pr76, Mrs Pupatello	
Agreed to	5314
<b>Development Charges Act, 1996,</b>	
Bill 98, Mr Leach	
Mr Leach	5314
Agreed to	5314

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Family Responsibility and Support</b>	
<b>Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996</b>	
Bill 82, Mr Harnick	
Ms Martel	5314, 5320
Mr Tilson	5318, 5322, 5325, 5329
Mr Sergio	5319, 5323, 5325
Mr Silipo	5319, 5324, 5325, 5330
Mr Hastings	5319, 5320, 5323, 5330
Mr Lalonde	5321
Mrs Boyd	5322
Mrs Caplan	5322, 5324
Mr Bradley	5325, 5329, 5331
Mr Laughren	5330
Debate adjourned	5333

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Estimates</b>	
The Speaker	5301
<b>Case report, Ombudsman</b>	
The Speaker	5301
<b>Visitors</b>	
The Speaker	5302
<b>Parliamentary language</b>	
The Speaker	5314

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 25 novembre 1996

## PREMIÈRE LECTURE

<b>Loi de 1996 sur les carburants</b>	
<b>de remplacement, projet de loi 97,</b>	
<i>M. McGuinty</i>	
Adoptée	5314
<b>Loi de 1996 sur les redevances</b>	
<b>d'aménagement, projet de loi 98,</b>	
<i>M. Leach</i>	
Adoptée	5314

## DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 1996 sur les obligations</b>	
<b>familiales et l'exécution</b>	
<b>des arriérés d'aliments,</b>	
Projet de loi 82, <i>M. Harnick</i>	
Débat ajourné	5333



No. 128

N° 128

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 26 November 1996

Mardi 26 novembre 1996

Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers





### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 26 November 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 26 novembre 1996

*The House met at 1333.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ULIANA BADIALI

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** This evening, the Lieutenant Governor will be presenting the government of Ontario's Senior Achievement Awards. It is my privilege to rise and pay tribute to one of the recipients, Mrs Uliana Badiali, a resident of my riding of Yorkview. I was indeed honoured to nominate Mrs Badiali for the esteemed award. Her vital contribution to our local community has spanned a lifetime of dedication and sacrifice for others.

Uliana Badiali is a very special and exceptional senior citizen. Through her good deeds, she has continuously exemplified for new immigrants to our province what it means to become part of a caring community. It is significant that in spite of her own personal hardships and difficulties, she always found the energy and tenacity to extend a helping hand to others.

Among the countless beneficiaries of Mrs Badiali's earnest kindness and benevolence are the unemployed, the destitute, the homeless, the hungry, the disabled, the illiterate and the sick, and the list goes on and on.

Being Uliana Badiali means having the perseverance and the spirit to take on any challenge, no matter how insurmountable, on behalf of the less fortunate and those unable to fend for themselves. Being Uliana Badiali means having the compassion to be a good Samaritan to those who have little hope. Being Uliana Badiali unquestionably symbolizes what it means to be a volunteer in Ontario.

## EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** People throughout the province are realizing more and more what this government's cuts to education are doing to our school system. On Saturday I had the opportunity to attend part of a conference in Brampton set up by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation and the Canadian Auto Workers. The 125 or so parents, students and teachers who were there understood and understand that when this government alleges that we are overspending here in Ontario relative to other provinces, those numbers are greatly exaggerated. They understand that what is driving the actions of this Minister of Education and Training is just cuts to education, an attempt to privatize the system

piece by piece and an attempt to disembowel the very existence of our school system.

Tomorrow in my riding and throughout the province I know that we will have parents come to constituency offices of members of this Legislature to again make the point that they, as parents, are seeing what these cuts are doing, that they see the inconsistency of the Premier of the province praising our school system abroad at the same time as the Minister of Education and Training is tearing it apart here at home, that in fact he has created the crisis that he wanted to create and is now implementing that crisis by tearing away the very fabric of our school system. They understand the agenda, they oppose that agenda, and this government will rue the day that it began on this agenda to devastate our school system.

## NAPANEE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

**Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings):** On Tuesday, November 12, I attended the sixth annual Napanee Business Improvement Association banquet and awards dinner. I rise today to make my fellow members aware of the contribution the BIA has made to the community of Napanee and surrounding area by encouraging local shopping.

Like other BIAs across the province, the Napanee BIA was founded 15 years ago to finance improvements to the downtown streets of Napanee. At that time a debenture was issued to pay for the street improvements. Although the debenture was recently retired by funds raised through taxes on businesses, the BIA continues to support and promote downtown business interests.

At the banquet, awards were given to three businesspersons in recognition of their contribution to the local business community: Byron Perry of Perry's Shell station, Pam Oliver of Napanee Florists, and Mark Daines of the Richelieu and Paisley hotels. All are to be congratulated for their efforts in improving the business area for Napanee.

Apart from being an awards banquet, the evening raised money for this year's Salvation Army Christmas collection. I'm happy to announce that over \$2,600 was raised through generous contributions by local merchants.

## EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I have here over 150 letters addressed to the Minister of Education and Training from the students of Stephen Leacock high school. I'm sure that by now the Minister of Education and Training has received thousands of letters from concerned parents, teachers and students.



These letters by students express a level of cynicism and anger that is alarming. I would suggest that the minister carefully read these letters. There is something underlined in almost every letter in this particular bundle. That tells you the degree of anger from these students. Let me read a part of what Khai Woo's letter says. She's a grade 12 student.

"I feel strongly against your education reform plan. I feel that your reform plan will devastate the great education system in Ontario. Regarding the Metro property tax money taken out of Metro, haven't you taken enough? Have we not suffered enough? I, along with my other classmates, have felt the cuts. My school is bad enough as it is with the cuts, and we can't take much more of this. What is to become of education in Ontario? The children are our future. We should teach them well and lead the way. Right now, the future looks fairly bleak. I feel that I'm saying this not just for myself but for all the other students in Ontario as well."

To paraphrase another student who wrote to you, when you are zealously cutting costs in your effort to find money for the tax cut, remember: Education is an investment, not a cost.

1340

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I'd like to direct my statement today to the Minister of Education and Training. Last Saturday the Ministry of Education and Training published an ad in newspapers across the province stating, "The government of Ontario is committed to improving the quality of education for every student in this province." Who do you think you're fooling? With a \$1-billion cut to education funding and an additional \$600 million to come, how can you pretend to be committed to the quality of education?

One of the negative results of the cuts that have already been made is that a large number of public school boards have discontinued their junior kindergarten programs.

Another way in which school boards have had to deal with the cuts is by cancelling adult education day school programs. Adults can no longer return to complete their high school education or upgrade, which is actually another odd move for this government since adult education is one of the most effective tools for getting people off welfare.

Yesterday I was presented with letters from students at La Cité de Jeunes in Kapuskasing who are very concerned about the proposed elimination of physical and health education in high schools. These students did a lot of research on the issue and on the negative impact that the elimination of these programs would have on all teenagers. I most certainly hope you will read their letters very carefully and take into consideration their position when you make your decision. These students did their homework and it's time for you to do yours.

I'd just like to read off some of the comments. "We, the students of Cité des Jeunes Secondary School in Kapuskasing, are concerned about the cuts that you, the Minister of Education, John Snobelen, are planning to make to this system and —"

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

## ANITA LARKIN

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** I would like to take this opportunity to tell my honourable colleagues about Anita Larkin, a grade 8 student at St Theresa school in the town of Whitby in the fine riding of Durham Centre.

This dedicated young person has won the first annual Patricia A. Curran Award as school safety patroller of the year, an award given out by the Canadian Automobile Association of central Ontario. The award is named in honour of Patricia Curran, who retired last year as CAA's central Ontario manager of public relations after 33 years of service to the auto club. One of her primary interests has always been children's safety.

In addition to a trophy, which will be displayed at the recipient's home until next year, Anita receives a personal plaque and a cheque for \$500.

The teacher who nominated Anita called her an "invaluable, dedicated, conscientious and reliable bus patroller." Along with her regular duties, Anita is responsible for picking up the kindergarten students at their room at day's end, she brings them to the bus and ensures they board safely.

I know my colleagues in the House today will join me in congratulating Anita Larkin on a job well done as school safety patroller of the year.

## HIGHWAY INSPECTORS

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Every day the revolutionary Harris government embarks upon a new course of action designed to destroy and dismantle services for the people of Ontario in general and the people of Niagara region in particular. With the announcement that the government will eliminate 600 inspectors in the Ministry of Transportation, jobs will be lost, possibly some of them in St Catharines, and an independent service will disappear.

Highway construction firms will be the only winners. The government is asking them to set their own standards and inspect their own work. If they're a little lax and the highway falls apart in five years instead of 10, then it's more repair work for the company.

For citizens who depend on the highway to get around, it's bad news on all fronts. There's a real incentive for constructors and contractors to cut corners, producing more profits now and more work in the future. It's going to cost a lot more money in the long run.

## OFFICE OF THE WORKER ADVISER

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Injured workers and employees of various industries and businesses now fear the Ontario government will eliminate the office of the worker adviser in Thorold. The office has been extremely helpful to injured workers, some of whom have difficulty with the English language and many of whom require assistance to deal with complicated cases and complicated legislation regulations.

The efficiency of the process has been enhanced as well by the intervention of competent, concerned employees in various worker adviser offices. I call upon the

government to keep the office open in Thorold and to enhance its service.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Could I ask the government members particularly to come to order. It's very difficult to hear the statements as they are. I'm not looking at anyone in particular; I'm just looking at the mass. Thank you.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I'd like to raise with the members of the assembly concerns that have been expressed in a letter to me by Kimberlee Starzynski from the Echo Bay area in my constituency about the family support plan. Ms Starzynski says that the plan was intended in part to enforce court orders against deadbeat dads. She asks, "Who is going to enforce the same orders against the deadbeat government?"

She points out that she has not received her support cheque, although the moneys have been directed from her ex-husband's employer. Her payment is due on the 1st of every month. Apparently the government can pay whenever it gets around to it.

Ms Starzynski's creditors expect payment of their accounts immediately. She wants to know who is going to pay the interest that she is charged on her accounts when she can't make the payments promptly due to the government's lack of efficiency.

The money she's receiving is not petty cash. She needs the money for the survival of herself and her children. She wants to know where the money goes when it leaves her ex-husband's place of employment, how much money is being earned by the government on interest collected from funds paid by support payors which have not been paid to the receivers, how much interest is being paid to the government. She'd like to know when she will be reimbursed for this interest and when her bad credit rating will be put right by this government.

#### OSTEOPOROSIS

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** Osteoporosis is a major public health problem. Osteoporosis affects 1.4 million Canadians over the age of 50, one in four women and one in eight men. Another two million Canadians are at risk of developing the disease. The risk of developing osteoporosis increases with age and is higher in women than in men and in whites than in blacks. It is caused by bone loss. Either a person has developed thinner, weaker bones during youth or he or she has lost a lot of bone in later life. It is estimated that the national cost of treating fractures exceeds \$600 million per year. These costs are expected to increase dramatically as the baby-boomer population ages.

There is no cure for osteoporosis; however, in most cases it can be treated. Prevention is the most effective way of halting the disease. Strategies include ensuring oestrogen replacement, adequate nutrition including calcium intake and programs of modest weight-bearing exercise. There is a great deal of additional research on understanding the biology of human bone, defining

individuals at special risk and developing safe, effective, low-cost strategies for fracture prevention.

I was happy last year to participate with the other women in all caucuses in the osteoporosis bus when it visited the Legislature and a number of my colleagues and I were tested.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### SENIOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** Mr Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand before you today to recognize 19 outstanding Ontarians, 19 Ontarians who exemplify the qualities of generosity, goodwill and community spirit, 19 Ontarians who bring to this province abundant energy, varied experiences, and whose roots span the entire globe, 19 Ontarians who have selflessly shared their wisdom and talents for the betterment of their communities.

I'm speaking about the 19 individuals who will be recognized this evening at the Ontario Senior Achievement Awards. Since the first awards in 1986, more than 200 seniors have been honoured for their contribution to the areas of community service, education, science, the arts, recreation, preservation of history, volunteerism and humanitarian activities. Each of these people is a gift to all of us and each dispels any myth that suggests that seniors are too old or too frail to contribute to their society.

It's a pleasure to announce this year's recipients: Ali Mire Awale and Charles Cheng of North York; Margaret Cahoon of Belleville; Janet Churchill of Elliot Lake; Margaret Harche of Sudbury; Uliani Badiali, Natalie Komarnycky, Mohinder Singh and Winnie Sung of Toronto; Lillian Kehl of Kitchener; Dolores Cavallero and Dr Arthur Gosselin of Ottawa; Jacob Kutz of St Catharines; Ronald Peters of Inverary; Ruth Redmond of Niagara Falls; Willis Rounding of Deep River; Angelique vander Duim of Oshawa; Irene Wilkins of Petrolia; and Frances Eva Maracle of Tyendinaga Territory.

Mrs Maracle, by the way, is 100 years old and still an active church volunteer, a chorus member and a gifted potter on the Tyendinaga reserve near Picton, Ontario.

When you see this kind of energy and this kind of commitment from people of any generation, let alone someone whose values were grounded in the days of premiers Oliver Mowat and James Whitney, you cannot help but be inspired.

As one of the nominators said about certain of these recipients, "If you put a dozen people of this calibre in a room together, the world's problems would be solved by the end of the day," and I don't doubt this for a moment.

Mr Speaker, I invite you and all of my colleagues in the House to join the Honourable Henry Jackman, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and myself in a ceremony this evening to recognize these special Ontarians. They are indeed an extraordinary group of Ontario citizens and we are very proud of them all.



1350

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** Later this afternoon I will introduce a new Workers' Compensation Act, the first time a new act has been introduced since 1914.

The new act provides a balanced approach to reform by preserving fair and secure benefits for injured workers while at the same time restoring the financial viability of the Workers' Compensation Board. Our reforms achieve the government's goal of a fully funded system that is sensitive to the needs of injured workers and sustainable by the employers who fund the system and provide the jobs.

We inherited a workers' compensation system with many problems. Its unfunded liability at \$10.7 billion is three times greater than the unfunded liabilities of all the other provincial WCBs combined.

We have a system where we are spending hundreds of millions of dollars on programs to return injured workers to work with absolutely little or nothing to show for it. We have a system that has become so bureaucratic and time-consuming that it fails to meet the needs of either the employee or the employer. At the same time, the system has never adequately focused on preventing workplace injury and illness, nor on doing the job it should to get people get back to their jobs in a safe and timely manner.

This bill is the last in a series of steps that we are taking to address this serious situation. Our legislation today is based on five principles:

First, our reforms will restore the financial viability of the workers' compensation system by adopting a series of balanced measures that will retire the unfunded liability of \$10.7 billion by the year 2014. In keeping with trends in other provinces, such as Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and New Brunswick, benefit levels will be reduced from 90% to 85% of net average pre-injury earnings. To ensure that the system remains fair and compassionate, workers who are 100% disabled and the survivors of deceased workers will retain full inflation protection. Continuing the approach adopted by the NDP government, the formula to calculate inflation protection for other workers is being modified. As well, to ensure that all employers in this province pay their fair share, we are strengthening and including provisions within the act to enable the board to collect outstanding workers' compensation debts from employers.

Second, the reforms are going to refocus the system as an insurance plan for workplace illness and injury that pays benefits for injuries and illness caused by work. The network of agencies serving the workplace parties will be restructured in order that we have a more coordinated system. This will include the integration of the Occupational Disease Panel into the board to more effectively focus our efforts to do more in the way of research.

Third, and this personally is going to be the top priority for the board, this bill for the first time entrenches the goal of prevention of workplace illness and injury in the workers' compensation system, which was never there before.

Fourth, the bill will improve return to work in a safe and timely manner by requiring the workers, the employers and the board to cooperate.

Fifth, the changes will enhance self-reliance by obliging workers and employers to cooperate in preventing injuries and in managing the consequences of the injuries when they do happen.

To reinforce the new emphasis on prevention and on return to work, and to affirm the return of the board to its original role as an insurance provider, the name of the board will be changed to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

Our new Workers' Compensation Act will promote economic growth and job creation in Ontario by reducing the human, the social and the economic cost of workplace injury and illness. Our goal simply is to turn the Workers' Compensation Board into a leading-edge institution in the delivery of workplace insurance, and we want to make sure that Ontario workplaces are among the safest in the world.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** We welcome the opportunity to begin the discussion of changes to workers' compensation, as our party welcomes the opportunity to make the board function more efficiently and effectively for injured workers. Anybody who would advocate the status quo I don't believe understands or appreciates the difficulties injured workers have in dealing with the board.

But what's troubling about the minister's statement and the minister's legislation is that this has nothing to do with meaningful reform of the board and everything to do with cutting benefits to injured workers and the most vulnerable people in this province.

This legislation will not improve the lives of injured workers; it will set them back. It will set their purchasing power back 60% in three years' time. It will make it harder for them to support their families, to pay their mortgages.

We're not surprised the minister had to change the name of the WCB because WCB couldn't possibly stand for Workers' Compensation Board; it stands for Witmer cuts benefits. That's what this is all about. It's about giving money back to employers at the expense of injured workers. It's about \$6 billion from those poor and vulnerable people in this province going to a number of employers who don't even have good health and safety records. It's not about helping people; it's about setting this province back. It's not about meaningful reform; it's about hurting the most vulnerable.

We welcome the opportunity to debate WCB reform and we will put forward a number of amendments to this bill which will make it serve injured workers better, which will make it more equitable, which will make it financed and funded in a better way.

We can't be surprised by this initiative. We've known for some time that the government's intention was to take money from injured workers and put it back into employers' pockets. We're not surprised because this government has taken money from the poorest welfare recipients to give back to the wealthiest in the form of a tax cut. This government has cut funding to hospitals, to our seniors, who need that the most. This government has



cut funding to education. This government does not have at its heart the interests of average Ontarians; it has at its heart a mean-spirited agenda that hurts the poorest and most vulnerable and helps those who need it the least.

So we will challenge the government on its assumptions, on its misstatements. We will fight to ensure that the billions of dollars you're taking out of injured workers' pockets get put back into their pockets so that their standard of living is not decreased over the coming few years. This is not about reform of the board; this is about who pays. This is about reallocating. This is not about fairness or equity. This isn't about balance. This is about an agenda that's driven by an ideology that's not working and this is about a government whose agenda is designed to attack the poor and the vulnerable, the weakest in our society, without any kind of meaningful or substantial progress to the future.

We look forward to debating this issue. We look forward to standing up with injured workers. We look forward to fighting this agenda and we look forward to you meeting your fate in the next election, because you will. You can't keep doing this to people. You've got to start standing up for people.

1400

#### SENIOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I am delighted to join the minister, my colleagues here and all my colleagues, as a matter of fact, to give recognition to our seniors who are receiving the award this evening.

I believe every citizen in Ontario should be entitled to receive and be recognized such as the 19 members. If the minister is willing to recognize the achievements that the seniors are making, the contribution that our seniors are making to our province, to the rest of our people, then I think the government should pay more attention to what they are doing to our seniors. Let me say that the seniors may forgive, but ultimately they may not forget. They will remember the hardships that the government is imposing upon the seniors.

These are the things we should also keep in mind when we recognize a group of seniors as to their lifelong experience, the time they dedicate unselfishly to other seniors and the rest of our community. That's not the only time that we should be recognizing the seniors. They should be recognized throughout the year, every day, every time, and should not continue to have hardships imposed on them such as the \$40 that now they will have to pay whenever they have to stay longer in a hospital bed. So while I do congratulate —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Responses, third party.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** First of all, to respond to the junior minister who had comments about seniors, let me say that our caucus shares in congratulating and acknowledging those seniors who are being awarded the designations that the minister talked about today.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** But moving to the issue of the WCB, I am certain the very

seniors that the minister talked about today would not in any way support or condone this government's attack on injured workers the way they have today, and a lot of those injured workers are seniors, Minister. While I'm on my feet talking about you, let's not forget that you, Minister Jackson, you've got your fingerprints all over this thing too and you've got to wear this as much as Minister Witmer and everybody else in that cabinet. And wear it you will, because as far as the workers of this province are concerned, November 26, 1996, is a day that will go down in infamy. It's the day this government chose to knowingly launch their legislative attack on injured workers in Ontario. I can't think of anything more despicable than an attack of that sort on the most vulnerable in our province.

First of all, I want to get the message out to thank very directly all the health and safety and WCB activists who have been working hard educating workers, and I'm talking very directly to you. I want to thank you for the work you've done, because we've now got a commitment from this government that there will be province-wide public hearings. That was the first goal, to make sure they couldn't run and hide. You've done that and now we've got a chance to throw some light on what this government is going to do to workers and we can get the message out that this is nothing but an attack on injured workers so that you, Minister, can give your friends a \$6-billion gift.

This government, I'm sure, will spend a lot of time trying to compare what they're doing to the changes we made when we were the government in the last Parliament of this province. Let me say very directly that first of all, we did not give any money back to employers. There were no gifts like you're doing, taking \$15 billion out of the pockets of injured workers and giving \$6 billion back to employers — nothing but legislated theft from the most vulnerable workers in our province, those being the injured workers of this province. That's what you're doing.

When we passed our legislation, we helped out 45,000 of the most vulnerable injured workers. We gave them a \$200-a-month increase in their money and we made sure it was 100% inflation protected. We did things that helped people who are on workers' compensation, unlike you, who have done absolutely nothing that helps injured workers. You're reducing what they're going to get from 90% to 85%, eliminating the chronic claim which will be limited to the usual healing time, whatever the hell that means. It's another way to restrict the amount of money and benefits workers can get. You're going to eliminate chronic mental stress. All these things are meant to pay for your free gift to your friends.

Let's remember, this is in the context of a government that's already got a litany of things they've done to attack workers. What are they? You killed the royal commission into the WCB. Then you eliminated the right of workers to have a 50% say in how the WCB is operated. That's already done and gone. You've gutted training to health and safety in the province. You've killed the Workplace Health and Safety Agency. You've cut money and they've had to lay off workers at the Workers' Health and Safety Centre. You're cutting money and gutting the office of the worker adviser.



You brought in Bill 7, which made scabs legal again. You took away the successor rights to public sector workers, which caused strikes and blood on the streets. That's what you've done. Then you took away rights until Bill 49, the Employment Standards Act.

Yet, Minister, you have the audacity to stand in your place day after day and say that you're trying to bring fairness and balance to the workplace. All you're doing is taking away workers' rights and you seem to think you're going to be able to do this and they're going to lie down and take it. Well, let me tell you something, Minister, you've got one hell of a shock coming when we get out in the public and we start talking about this WCB. You watch what workers are going to say to you when you attack the most vulnerable injured workers in the province. You are not going to do that without a fight, and the fight starts today.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

#### PARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Yesterday I read into the record a number of strikes where scabs are being used across the province. These are all part of the public record. The Ministry of Labour has a record of these strikes. The Minister of Labour got up and accused me of deliberately distorting the facts. You later ruled that out of order, Speaker. I believe the Minister of Labour should withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I appreciate what you're saying, to the leader of the third party. I ruled it out of order because clearly I didn't at the time. Having reflected upon it, it was a mistake; I should have ruled it out of order and I apologize to the Legislature for it.

Having said that, I understand the minister in fact said that yesterday. There were a number of people who said it afterwards. I can ask only that from now, this point, in future it not be used. With all due respect, all I can offer the members is, upon reflection, I apologize for not ruling it out of order yesterday.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** Minister of Labour, get up and withdraw.

**The Speaker:** The member for Cochrane North.

**Mr Len Wood:** Well, she won't withdraw. She can get up on her feet and withdraw.

**The Speaker:** The member for Cochrane North, there's no one at fault but me. Again, I apologize for not ruling it out of order. On reflection, I should have. It was used a number of times and I can only offer my apologies. It was my fault.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Yesterday, in a question to the Ministry of the Attorney General, I accused the Attorney General of deliberately distorting the facts. I would like at this point to withdraw that as it is out of order, and a class Minister of Labour would do the same thing.

**The Speaker:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine, thank you.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** Once again this government has decided to attack the most vulnerable people in our society. After cutting the poor, the disadvantaged, the elderly, today you're declaring war on injured workers.

To the Minister of Labour, I want to ask you, do you really believe that this type of cuts to benefits coupled with a cut to assessments is in the interests of injured workers? Do you really believe that it's fair and balanced? Do you really think that the changes you're making today will make their lives any better? It's our view that not only are you not improving the board but you're setting back the board, or the new agency. Minister, could you outline for me today what other steps you're prepared to take to help injured workers and not hurt them.

1410

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** To the member opposite, I appreciate that you haven't had the opportunity to take a look at the new legislation. As I indicated to you, we have introduced today a bill which is totally different from the 1914 version. You will see a bill that now has as its focus, at the front of the legislation, a totally new emphasis and priority on the prevention of injury and illness.

That's how this legislation is different. Up until now we have simply allowed injury and illness to occur in this province. I indicate to you that I'm not happy with the number of fatalities; I'm not happy with the number of critical injuries that are reported to the Ministry of Labour. We have been working diligently, since we were elected, to improve the health and safety record. We are trying to coordinate activities. The key difference is that the focus has been shifted to prevention, followed by return to work.

**Mr Duncan:** Minister, I had a chance to review the bill. I reviewed the Jackson report. I reviewed the cabinet submission. The simple fact remains that you're doing nothing about prevention, you're doing nothing to improve the lot of injured workers. In fact, you cut 25% from the health and safety division of your ministry. You're suggesting today the largest cut to injured workers we've seen since the NDP cut their inflation protection some three years ago. This is the largest one since the NDP attacked injured workers three years ago.

Minister, the estimated cost, according to your own figures, of the cut in WCB assessments is \$6 billion. You are taking money out of the pockets of injured workers and the most vulnerable people to make up that cut. How can you justify to those injured workers, particularly unorganized workers, pensioners, the people who are going to be affected the most, that you can give a \$6-billion cut on the one hand and take \$6 billion from them in the interest of dealing with the unfunded liability? Don't you see the contradiction?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** To the member opposite, I know you haven't had a chance to read the bill, because there simply has not been time. I would just bring you back to



the point I made: We want to prevent people from being injured in the first place. We want to ensure that we improve the quality of life for people in this province, so our focus is going to be on prevention. That's why we've integrated the activities of the agency into the board. That's why we're going to overhaul the board and we're going to put a senior executive in charge of prevention. We've never done that before.

If you're satisfied to continue to see the high numbers for fatalities and injuries, I'm not. I repeat again that our focus is on prevention. Our focus is on preserving the benefits for the injured workers; we have not lowered them to the extent they have in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and New Brunswick. You know that the changes have been fair.

**Mr Duncan:** With all due respect, you've done nothing to prevent injury or illness in the workplace except cut the very tools you need to prevent them. You've done nothing, effectively, to address that issue. The only thing you've done effectively is cut benefits. You've cut benefits to the most vulnerable. You've cut benefits to pensioners. You've cut their ability to improve their standard of living. You've cut their ability to maintain their standard of living. How can you justify this when you're giving away \$6 billion in assessments, some of which will go to employers who have absolutely horrible health and safety records? How can you justify it when you've cut, cut, cut health and safety protection for injured workers in this province? How can you justify it, Minister?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Let's move to the second area where we are focusing our energies: on improving the return to work. Up until now governments have spent millions of dollars — last year we spent about half a billion dollars — to get injured workers back to work, with little or no success to show for it.

For the first time we have rewritten the act so that there be obligations on the worker and the board and the health care professionals and the employer to work cooperatively together, keep together, communicate and make sure we identify the functional ability of injured workers and bring them to the point where we can quickly get them back into the workplace.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** My question is to the Minister of Health. You've slashed hospital budgets by 18%. You've made an unprecedented power grab under Bill 26. You're the one who gave us the infamous Tory bulldozer now working its way across the province, plowing under hospital after hospital. You're going to be remembered as the person who began to destroy health care in this province. Time and again you have denied that your cuts, your reckless bully tactics are not affecting patient care in this province. Do you still stand by that position?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** The only one that's cut health care in this province is the federal Liberal government in terms of dollars. We are asking hospitals to find efficiencies. Where we hear of problems we're not allowing gaps to occur in services. We've told all hospitals, and they're working very well, to ensure

that all the dollars they find in efficiencies are reinvested into front-line services so that we have a fully integrated and better health care system when the restructuring is completed.

**Mr Duncan:** I was curious that the minister said there were no gaps in service, because day after day in this House we have raised example after example of Ontarians who are suffering as a result of your cuts and your government's cuts to health care, your big gaps. Still the minister denies the impact his cuts are having.

Today I want to talk about a gentleman named Allan Rawlyk in Thunder Bay. He's a haemodialysis patient whose access to dialysis is in an artificial vein in his arm. He has been suffering from complications after leakage began. Yesterday, on the advice of his specialist, he flew to Toronto to see a vascular surgeon. The surgeon determined that surgery was required.

After coming all the way from Thunder Bay to Toronto General he was told they couldn't do the surgery as they'd already reached their November quota for dialysis treatment, which would be needed as a backup if something went wrong. He was told to return next week when the hospital had a new budgetary allotment. Minister, is this acceptable to you or is this another gap in service?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** The people in the province know that across the country and North America we have fixed budgets. It's up to hospitals to prioritize the needs of the patients who present themselves or are referred to those hospitals.

As you know, we only fund a certain number of lung operations at a particular hospital per year. As that budget is used up they can reprioritize their money or try and make arrangements with other hospitals. I'm explaining that we have to work with hospitals to set priorities within the budgets. I'd be happy to look into the case. The system has not changed one iota in that respect. In fact, health care budgets are up significantly in many parts of the province.

Once you provide us with all the information we will work with that particular hospital, or there may be a capacity at other institutions to look after the gentleman in question.

1420

**Mr Duncan:** Not only is there a gap in service, there's a chasm. There's a chasm between gaps in service and your credibility. We keep saying example after example after example of people in this province who are suffering as a result of your cuts. Your reinvestments haven't come close to what you said you'd reinvest. This gentleman flew all the way from Thunder Bay. His surgeon was willing to do the operation. The only reason he returned without receiving care is because you have forced hospitals to ration that care. Every day he goes without care, he risks infection and further complications.

Minister, what do you say to this gentleman, who's watching television tonight, and how do you explain your comment that there are no gaps in service to somebody who's waiting in fear, looking for surgery, looking for help, when you're preventing him from getting it?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Surgeries and the priority of surgeries have been determined by physicians on a clinical basis. I don't understand this case, because we've pumped \$25 million this year, new dollars, into dialysis



services. Dialysis, cardiac and mental health services and a few others are protected budgets. Hospitals, by law, cannot cut those budgets, so yes, I don't understand this —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Essex South, please come to order; Windsor-Sandwich; the leader of the official opposition. I'm calling the Leader of the Opposition to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Leader of the official opposition, please come to order; the member for Oriole as well.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Again, if the honourable member provides the details we'd be happy to look into it. Dialysis is a protected budget. We've added \$25 million this year to that budget; we're spending more money than at any other point in history on dialysis services in this province. I would be very interested to help all I can with this particular case, because there should be no reason that this gentleman can't get surgery in this province.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Labour, who today is putting the knife to the workers' compensation system: The government is taking \$15 billion from injured workers, you're killing the Occupational Disease Panel, you're undermining the confidentiality of medical records, and you're going to give \$6 billion to your wealthy friends. But what's incredible is that this Conservative government tries to package this ugly attack on injured workers as somehow improving accident prevention, as somehow improving the return to work, as somehow being good for workers.

Part of this bill is a 50% cut to the retirement pensions of retired injured workers, some of the poorest people in our society. Can the Minister of Labour tell us why the Conservative government is cutting the retirement pensions of injured workers by 50% while you give \$6 billion to your wealthy corporate friends?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I would simply indicate to the leader of the third party that I believe the legislation before us is going to improve the quality of life for people in this province. I would also indicate to you that the changes being made to the pension fund will still enable the injured worker to make his or her 5% contribution.

**Mr Hampton:** So the government takes 50% away from retired injured workers, gives it to their corporate friends, and then says to the retired injured worker, "You replace what we gave to our corporate friends." What a deal.

There are some other issues that need to be addressed. Under the Workers' Compensation Act, the spouse and children of a worker who is killed by a workplace accident or occupational disease have a right to compensation, but you're going to cut that compensation for their surviving children and spouse. Perhaps you're hoping that by cutting the surviving children and the surviving spouse, somehow this will be an incentive in the workplace.

It's bad enough that the Conservative government is lowering the standard of living of all working people in

this province by encouraging scabs. It's bad enough that you're driving down the standard of living of injured workers with these mean-spirited cuts. But will you at least consider sparing the children and the surviving spouses?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** As you well know, the inflation protection will still be there at 100% for the disabled and also for the survivors.

**Mr Hampton:** This gets more incredible. You cut the surviving spouse and you cut the children and then you say: "But after we've cut you there'll still be some inflation protection. Don't worry, we'll cut you, but somehow you'll be protected from inflation." It's not inflation that people are worried about. Inflation runs at less than 2%. It's the more than 5% that you're going to take.

Just one further question. The government says this has to be done because they say compensation rates are too high in Ontario, that compensation runs higher than in the United States. Well, we checked with some of your corporate friends. We looked at KPMG Peat Marwick, and they show that in fact Ontario's compensation rates are lower than a lot of the states in the United States.

Minister, why don't you just come clean on this? Why don't you just come out and admit that you're going to take from retired injured workers, you're going to cut their pensions, you're going to take from the surviving spouses and the surviving children of workers who die in the workplace to give money to your wealthy corporate friends?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** If we want to be honest, we need to recognize that the KPMG study, which was done in 1994, was done for the federal government in order that they could sell Canada to the investment community. As a result, it very selectively surveyed —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order, leader of the third party.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** The information contained in that study very selectively surveys certain sectors and applies, so it is not totally representative of the true facts and does not cover all of industry in the province of Ontario or elsewhere.

## VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce a former member from Oshawa in the members' west gallery, Mr Mike Breagh. Welcome.

## HEALTH CARE REFORM

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My next question is for the Minister of Health and it concerns the health care crisis he has created in Ontario. Last week the Toronto Star cited a government source as confirming that your government plans to download the responsibility for public health units, long-term care, assistive devices and community health centres to municipalities. Now, downloading these health care services on to the municipalities puts a huge financial burden on the property tax system and threatens the very existence of these important public health services.



My question of the Minister of Health is this: Will you reassure the health care workers and health care providers across this province that the Conservative government will not be cutting these important public health care services by pushing them off on the municipalities? Will you confirm that?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** In the Who Does What process, which is trying to sort out and delay the responsibilities that layers of government have in this province, if we look at some of the examples the honourable member has raised, we have municipalities involved, which have their bureaucracies to deliver those programs, and we have the Ministry of Health, with its huge bureaucracy, to deliver those programs. The government is about getting rid of waste and duplication and cutting red tape and ensuring that we don't spend money on bureaucrats and bureaucracies, but that we spend money on patients, the nurses who will provide those public health services and front-line services in general.

I can assure the honourable member, though, this is not about cutting health care budgets. This is about trying to free up administrative dollars and driving those dollars to front-line services, where all of us should be concentrating our efforts.

1430

**Mr Hampton:** I think the horse is out of the barn now. These are some of the most important health care services that people across Ontario receive. I just want to give the minister an example.

Just this week he was proudly pointing out that Sick Children's Hospital is operating as business as usual. I want to remind the minister that Sick Kids is operating on an as-usual basis because the physicians there are on an alternative payment system, the same alternative payment system that community health centres are on. Community health centres are providing services that are unaffected by your current disputes with physicians and everyone else in the province. They operate 24 hours a day. They provide services to some of the people in this province who are most in need of health care.

Minister, are you seriously considering pushing community health centres on to municipalities? Are you seriously considering undermining one of the primary care delivery systems that are really working?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Community health centres themselves aren't waiting around and wallowing in the status quo; they're working with us on primary care reform. We're going to build and improve upon the experience we've had with Ontario's community health centres.

Again, Who Does What is about delayering government and bureaucracies and making sure we have the dollars freed up and driven towards front-line services. All of the programs across government are being looked at.

The honourable member in his first question mentioned public health. I'd remind him that all of the employees of public health are municipal employees today. Your local medical officer of health is a local municipal employee. Yet we retain a very large bureaucracy at Queen's Park to check over the shoulders of these people who are doing a very good job at the local level.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** We're having those discussions to make sure that all of our dollars are driven towards front-line services and away from administration and waste and duplication.

**Mr Hampton:** The Conservative government calls it Who Does What. It's become increasingly apparent that it's all about who does what to whom, and what you're doing is you're going to download a whole bunch of health care costs; you're going to download some of the most efficiently run health care systems in this province on to municipalities. This is nothing more than cuts.

Let's review a little bit of history. Let's look at the evidence. Last year you cut the funding to community health centres by \$2.5 million. You cut the health innovation fund. You announced your Primary Health Care Reform Implementation Steering Committee in July, stating you'd have pilots up and running by the end of the year. It's now the end of November and there are no pilots. Now we see that you are downloading even more. The health care system is in chaos. Doctors, nurses and now community health centres and public health units see that there is no reform; there's only deconstruction of health care, cuts to health care.

Will you at least commit today that community health centres will remain the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and that —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister of Health.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Community health centres will continue to be the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. That is the goal of primary care reform regardless of what particular administration is involved there. We want to look at every area and figure out what area of government, what level of government, can best deliver the programs. We're still going through that exercise and no decisions at all have been taken whatsoever.

For the honourable member to leave the impression with this House that there have been cuts to the overall health care budget, I remind the honourable member that he has yet to get up in this House and acknowledge the —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister of Health.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I would just remind the honourable member that the government has lived fully up to its commitment to preserve the health care budget. We've increased the health care budget in spite of the \$2.1-billion cut from the federal government. We will absolutely live up to that commitment throughout our term in office. Our word is our word, and we are doing everything we said we would do, which is far better than either of these two parties could talk about after their shameful years in government.

## HOSPITAL FINANCING

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** This morning a joint statement on hospital sector cutbacks was made by the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario and the Ontario College of Family Physicians. They want to alert this minister that his cuts to our hospitals' budgets have created a crisis in quality patient care. They are very clear in what they are saying to the minister. They believe his plans and his cuts to our hospital budgets will



result in a breakdown in quality, comprehensiveness and universality of Ontario's health care system. As they point out in their press release, it is a system that has been the hallmark of Canadian identity.

They are saying to you, Minister, that hospitals cannot cope with the cuts you are making to their budgets, that patients are suffering, they're being sent home without community supports, and that hospitals are replacing nurses with less qualified people and sick people in hospital are suffering. What do you say and what is it going to take to get you to listen to these people?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** My response is twofold. The Ontario Nurses' Association said two weeks ago that they believe there's 30% waste in the hospital system. Secondly, and the honourable member has had an opportunity to grill the Health Services Restructuring Commission, as it is going around the province we see examples of where they're finding waste and where they're asking those communities and those hospitals to get rid of the waste and concentrate on front-line patient services.

We know what the government has set out in terms of the vision for health care, which is a fully integrated system where we break down those hospital walls and concentrate on the patient — not on the silos and not on the institutions that exist today, but actually concentrate on the needs of a patient from pre-cradle to grave. As we do that — and the nurses agree with that, and the doctors. I will be meeting with the Ontario College of Family Physicians, and if you read the other letter they sent, they're asking us to move towards a fully integrated system and all of the things we're working on with our partners in health care. I am confident that together we'll get rid of the waste and the duplication, cut the red tape and drive more dollars to patient services.

**Mrs Caplan:** To the Minister of Health, I would say: Listen to the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, listen to the Ontario Nurses' Association, listen to the Ontario College of Family Physicians and listen to those people who are saying to you, "Yes, create an integrated health system, but a barrier to doing that are your cuts to hospitals, because those are hurting patients and they are stopping us from getting to the kind of fully integrated system" that you and they envision.

You are cutting \$1.3 billion out of hospitals, registered nurses are being replaced with less qualified workers and patients are suffering, Minister. Your own Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council asked you to look into the replacement of nurses. You hear that patient care is suffering and that, I quote, "There is a widening gap in our hospitals between the care that is required and the care that is available."

Minister, listen. This is the effect of your cuts to hospitals. You cannot deny it. Will you stand up today and say that you will stop the cuts to hospital budgets and put patients' interests first?

1440

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I would ask the honourable member to listen to the hospital administrators in her own riding. Mr MacKenzie is very much one of those in the honourable member's own riding who tells us that the government is on the right track. I spoke only three weeks ago

to the Ontario Hospital Association and the honourable member was at that meeting. The message they gave us was that the government is on the right track, that what we're asking hospitals to do is very doable. The commission has said it's more than doable. The nurses themselves, including representatives of the RNAO whom I met with earlier this week, are saying it's doable.

I'd ask the honourable member to simply be a little more optimistic, because the people in health care are optimistic that at the end of the day we're going to have a much better system where the patient comes first always throughout their journey through our health care system.

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question of the Solicitor General. Last session the Solicitor General was adamant that he would not be involved in operational matters related to events that led to the death of Dudley George, that he would not be involved in OPP operations. In answer to a question from my colleague the member for London Centre, the Solicitor General said, "If I as the Solicitor General...at any time involved myself in the details of operational matters of the police or investigations being conducted by the police, the honourable member would be the first on her feet to object, and rightly so."

Now we have proof that in fact the solicitor was involved in police matters. The police logs kept at Ipperwash show that OPP inspector Linton spoke on the phone from the command post of Superintendent Parkin and he said, "Marcel Beaubien was in tonight, he had talked to the Solicitor General.... And the Attorney General, they were comfortable."

Can the solicitor explain the contradiction between his comments in this House and the police log, which makes it clear —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Solicitor General.

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I would suggest the honourable member talk to the OPP with respect to their logs. I have no recollection of such a conversation.

**Mr Wildman:** The Solicitor General says he has no recollection, but the police log also says that Superintendent Parkin says OPP commissioner Thomas O'Grady had been talking to Runciman and that they were "more than pleased with what the OPP was doing." Inspector Carson states that the Premier and the Solicitor General want to "deal with" this matter — that is, the occupation — at a meeting "this morning."

Can the solicitor explain this apparent contradiction between his statements and what the police logs indicate? Did he discuss this matter with the commissioner? Did he express opinions about the OPP's position? What does "deal with" this matter actually mean?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The member is going to interpret these things in any way he wishes, especially if they can perhaps give him some sort of political advantage or perceived political advantage. I want to indicate that I said I do not involve myself in operational decisions of



the police, and that is the case. It certainly has been the case since I assumed these responsibilities. I think the important remark they should be listening to is from the commissioner of the OPP, who said very clearly that there has been no political involvement or interference with respect to deliberations or operational matters surrounding the Ipperwash situation.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'd like to introduce, in the members' east gallery, the ex-member for Scarborough Centre, Reverend Bill Davis. Welcome.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** My question is for the Attorney General. I have been contacted by a family support plan recipient. Sandy is in hiding from an abusive ex-husband. She cannot raise this question through her own MPP for fear of identifying her whereabouts. Sandy has been registered with the family support plan since 1994. Originally, her ex-husband paid support for two months but has not paid any money for the last several months. She is now owed \$4,000. Sandy believes he shelters assets under another person's name. I would like to know how you are going to help Sandy get the money owed to her.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Thank you for the question. As the member knows, I can't and won't comment on any specific cases. However, Bill 82, which is presently being debated, would allow us to pursue sheltered assets. As well, it will give us the ability to suspend drivers' licences and bring people forward who could begin paying on defaulted support orders. This will help us get more money to women and children who depend on it, and it will hopefully help the individual you referred to. I hope this can become law as soon as possible.

**Mrs Ross:** We've been debating Bill 82 for nearly a week. Sandy is owed \$4,000. As you said, she would probably be helped once this bill has been passed through. Minister, when do you think we will see this bill become law, and how soon after its passage do you think we'll be able to put further steps in place to help Sandy?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Again, thank you for the question. I would like this legislation to become law as fast as possible. If this legislation can become law by the beginning of January, we can start implementing licence suspension, we can start implementing a course to pursue people who shelter assets and we can start getting money to women and children. I hope people will support this legislation and make it law so that we can begin to collect moneys that have long remained outstanding.

#### TAX REDUCTION

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Chairman of Management Board and, I gather, the senior person responsible for finances. The minister will know that today the Dominion Bond Rating Service, one of our major rating services, issued a report

on Ontario's finances that can only be described as a warning about some significant financial problems ahead.

They point out that the 30% personal income tax scheme, they call it "cut," is the single largest challenge to the balanced-budget objective. They estimate that 88% of any growth in revenues is going to go right out the door in the tax cut. They point out that the province of Ontario debt is going to go up \$20 billion over the next three years and that we are going to have to borrow \$12 billion to pay for the tax scheme.

The question is this, Minister: Can you explain to the people of Ontario how Ontario can afford to borrow \$12 billion to fund your tax cut?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** The Minister of Finance has indicated the position of the government over a number of different questions that have been raised in the House on this matter.

One of the greatest problems we face in the province is unemployment. Clearly the tax cut is designed to allow people to keep more of their own money in their pockets. They'll use that money, they'll invest that money in the economy and jobs will be created. When people are working, they're paying taxes, and it's certainly the position of this government that over the course of this term that money will be returned to the treasury in terms of more people working, more people paying taxes and paying back into the revenues of the province. Indeed, this government is on target to eliminate the deficit by the end of this term and to start paying down the debt at that time.

**Mr Phillips:** The question, just to refresh your memory, is on the tax cut. The Dominion Bond Rating Service clearly says this is the big risk. They go on to point out that if the province's growth projections are off by even 1%, you're going to have to cut another \$2.8 billion in spending, so you're going to have to slash deeper than you had ever contemplated.

1450

But I go back to the fundamental question, that is, they say that's the big risk, the cut in personal taxes, so can you explain to the people of Ontario, when the Dominion Bond Rating Service agency and others say that our debt is going to go up \$20 billion over the next three years, how can we afford to go out and borrow \$12 billion to pay for your tax scheme?

**Hon David Johnson:** I'll explain and indicate to the member opposite and to the people of Ontario that indeed Ontario this year has been able to borrow, with the spread in comparison to the federal government, in comparison to the American government, at a much narrower rate. In other words, the investment community in the world is saying that Ontario is a good risk. As a result of our fiscal policies, Ontario is a good risk and there is a good deal of confidence in the province, more confidence than we've seen for many years.

I'll also indicate to the member opposite that in the Liberal red book of last year there is a quote that says, "As for Ontario families, many can't afford the taxes they're paying right now." That comes from the party indicating —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.



## EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question for the Minister of Education and Training. Tomorrow morning parents of school children in towns and cities across Ontario are going to be visiting constituency offices to discuss and protest against the cuts that you've made to education. I understand the minister has extended the deadline to January 2 for the so-called consultation on the secondary school reform proposals. In reality, that's only three weeks more when you take into account the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Will the minister commit to a realistic time frame for this consultation? Will he widen the consultation, not just limit it to certain invited people to the meetings, and allow all issues, that is, over 50 issues that are raised in the booklet, to be discussed and questioned rather than limiting discussion to only four?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member opposite for the question. Yes, we have agreed to extend the consultation period by another month because we want to hear the opinions of students who are currently in the system, of parents and of taxpayers across the province who I know are concerned with the quality of our education system and particularly reforms to secondary school.

The member has pointed out accurately that there are a number of issues to debate on a four-year secondary school program, on meeting that challenge, the challenge that has been met by every other province in Canada. If the member would read our discussion paper, he would find that we've specifically asked parents and students to respond to all the issues. We've said, "In addition to your responses to the following questions, we encourage you to provide us with comments and suggestions on related issues."

We are extending this consultation. It's unparalleled in Ontario to have this broad a consultation: 2.5 million copies of the discussion paper; consultations across the province; over 5,000 responses to date. I'm very pleased with the participation of the public in this process.

**Mr Wildman:** In addition to the parents' voices that are being raised, this morning the people responsible for implementing the changes to the curriculum and so on, the province's high school principals, added their voices and they called the consultation a sham. They outlined their concerns about curriculum, the costs, community and consultation. They pointed out that if there was an attempt to discuss more than the four issues that the ministry officials wish to discuss, parents and students were being told to deal with that in another forum or some other way.

How can you explain reducing compulsory instruction time on English, for instance, from 440 hours to a maximum of 360 hours? How is that going to assist students to make it in this world?

Minister, will you explain how you're benefiting Ontario's youth by cutting the time they study English by 18%?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** It's an opportunity now to put before the public and this chamber once again the things we have suggested. By the way, for the information of

the honourable member opposite, the items in our discussion paper, the things we brought forward to the people of Ontario, are suggestions that have been made to us by people who are professional educators, professional teachers, people from our colleges and universities who worked on our advisory panel. It's our intention, after we have a consultation with the public to find out what the taxpayers, parents and students think, to go back to educators and say, "How do we fulfil these requests?" That's the reason for the broad communications.

I would say to the member opposite that I hope, and I've talked to my parliamentary assistant, who's been running things very capably — by the way, no one has been turned away, to my knowledge, from one of our public consultations. I would encourage those who are in the education community to please make room at these consultations for parents, make room for the taxpayers, make room for students so their voices can be heard. We will go back to the educators, to the professionals in our system and ask them the questions.

## WORKFARE

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Recent newspaper reports have been suggesting a change to our Ontario Works policy. My constituents in St Catharines-Brock are very confused in this regard, as they receive different information from my office and from the media. Minister, would you please clarify once and for all for this Legislature the government's position on this issue?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Recent media reports have been trying to say that Ontario Works, our workfare program, has gone back to the drawing-board. I would like to tell them that is absolutely untrue. It is not going back to the drawing-board, it is not back on the drawing-board, and there is no need to put it back on the drawing-board because it is working and being implemented, community by community, across this province. We have 12 communities now up and running. We have another 10 coming in the door. I announced a week ago that phase 2 of Ontario Works is not more pilot projects; phase 2 is province-wide implementation.

**Mr Froese:** Minister, another aspect of confusion for my constituents is welfare recipients' responsibilities under this program. Could you outline these responsibilities for us?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** There have been some attempts to confuse people about what is happening with our workfare program. For those who are on social assistance it is mandatory to participate in the Ontario Works program. There is no policy change, there is no rule change. That is consistent with the commitment we gave to the voters of Ontario in terms of what our Ontario workfare program would be.

There is a range of programs they are participating in, provided by our municipal partners. The goal is to get people on welfare back into paid jobs as quickly as we can.

## TRANSIT SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Linda Concellier is in the gallery today. She has asked that we bring her appeal to you publicly.

A few weeks ago you were told that her Wheel-Trans service was going to be cut because of changes in the eligibility criteria. Linda is a bright, competent university graduate who wants to contribute her skills to the economic life of this province. But Linda has cerebral palsy, and her doctors say it's dangerous for her to use public transit. Her final appeal has just been denied.

Minister, what advice can you give Linda today about what to do about her situation?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** Obviously this government is very concerned about the mobility and accessibility of disabled people of Ontario. I'm concerned that some processes that have been put in place might not have been bringing things to a realization of what everyone expects, but these are things we have to resolve and try and work our way through.

1500

I don't know whom this individual is dealing with, whether it's the Toronto Transit Commission or another municipality. But one of the things I want to say is that all decisions, as far as Wheel-Trans or disabled transit are concerned, are clearly municipal decisions, and we're funding partners. I want to say to this House that we have not cut disabled funding. The funding that was in place has been supported. That's basically what I can say.

**Mr Morin:** I met with Linda in my office. I'm not a doctor, but it's quite simple to realize that she is incapable of walking on her own without at least some assistance from Wheel-Trans.

Your government is distancing itself from the fallout of its economic policies, but you cannot deny that the cutbacks in services to individuals like Linda are a result of this government's actions. In the last election you promised to protect funding for people with disabilities. Now we know that the very meaning of that word will be altered. As a result the community is bracing itself for even deeper cuts in the near future. Labels come and go but the very real needs of individuals remain.

Minister, can you tell Linda — I invite you after question period to come and meet with her — and others who care deeply about this issue that you will show leadership in defending the rights of people in need regardless of definition?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** Once again I would like to say that this government is definitely concerned about making sure that people who are disabled have an opportunity to get around.

We did not cut one dollar from disabled transit. The funding that was in place has been maintained. Municipalities are the ones that make a decision on who qualifies and so on, but apparently there is an appeal process in place that can be utilized if someone does not agree with a decision that was made.

This government has been working with municipalities in making an attempt to create a community transportation action program, and I believe these types of pro-

grams can also participate in delivering services like disabled transit and getting better utilization of the equipment we've got.

Very clearly this government, the Harris government, has not cut disabled transit.

## ONTARIO LOTTERY CORP

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** Three weeks ago I asked the minister who heads up the cabinet committee looking at privatization; today I've got a question for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. The minister, from my initial question, would not categorically state that he was not going to privatize the Ontario Lottery Corp.

Just this past Friday there was a leak out of government that suggests that the OLC is in line for privatization and will be reduced from 770 employees to 350. I've read your terms of reference to the external review. There's absolutely nothing in here re the impact this will have on my community. Will you promise today to put that into anything you will do and ask this consultant to consider the impact this major move will have on my community?

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** I'm well aware of the member's concern about his constituency. We talked a lot about that in the estimates process we finished just last Wednesday. At the time that we went through, in the estimates process, the subject of the review of the Ontario Lottery Corp I told him that what was being done was being done in all the agencies, boards and commissions our government is involved in.

We think it is very good business to have a proper review of our agencies, boards and commissions. Nowhere did I tell him or suggest that this agency was going to be privatized or that there would be any dramatic changes occurring. But I thought it was advisable to tell him that what was being done with the Ontario Lottery Corp in Sault Ste Marie was being done with all our agencies, boards and commissions.

**Mr Martin:** This corporation is one of the primary enterprises in our community, not only for the present but for the future, one of the biggest employers in Sault Ste Marie. When it was moved first to Sault Ste Marie the government of the day laid out very clearly why they did that.

It says here: "A careful development plan for decentralization of an organization provides unique opportunities for the host community, the relocating organization and the government, expanded local demand generated by relocated employees, ongoing local procurement of goods and services by the relocated organization and local product and supplier development for new goods and services. Greater diversity of local employment base enables the community to better cope with economic cycles."

What are you saying to these people today? What am I to say when I go back to Sault Ste Marie on Friday to these people re the impact of what you're proposing on this corporation and the people of my community? Will you consider the impact that this will have on Sault Ste Marie and Algoma before you to do this?



**Hon Mr Saunderson:** What I'd like the member to go back to his constituents and tell them is that this is a responsible government on this side of the House, not like it was in the old days. Recently, about six months ago, we did a review of this particular agency and found that we could save \$36.5 million. I would suggest that if we can find that kind of money —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister.

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** What I was saying before the interruption was that we found \$36.5 million last year on a search with that particular agency, and as far as we're concerned we think there could be more savings and we intend to do what we are doing as we are doing with all our agencies, boards and commissions. It is good business practice. This government is determined to run a business-like operation.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Recently the mayor of Scarborough issued an open letter to the Scarborough residents which was published on the front page of our local paper, the Scarborough Mirror, last week. In that letter the mayor states that the province has refused to meet with local officials and mayors regarding the issue of amalgamation.

Would the minister inform the House of meetings that he and his staff have had with the mayors and local officials since that letter was published concerning amalgamation and how those meetings went and what amount of research has gone into the issue of amalgamation and how his decisions will be brought forward so that the people of Scarborough and Metro Toronto will know?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I thank the member for Scarborough Centre for the question, an excellent question. As the House knows, there has been no final decision made at this time on the Toronto governance issue. At this point in time there has been no decision, but it's going to come very quickly.

We've given the six mayors until November 29 to formulate their proposal, they having stated that they intend to cut the size of councils by more than half and integrate all major services. I'm waiting with bated breath for that report. I've spoken to some of the mayors individually and I've spoken to them all collectively in a meeting we had on the 21st. We're going to be meeting again with them on the 29th.

I want to say, in response to the second half of that question, that there are more than 60 reports on restructuring in the greater Toronto area. There is a report —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Supplementary. Member for Scarborough Centre.

**Mr Newman:** The mayor's open letter refers to our government as irresponsible and states that the minister is basing his decisions without facts, only on gut feelings. Is this true?

**Hon Mr Leach:** It is true that we have more information on this issue than probably any other issue we've

been dealing with. The member from Scarborough has asked for a list of the reports. If you haven't got it now, I will send it over to you right after question period.

1510

### PETITIONS

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has started to charge seniors and social assistance recipients a \$2 user fee for each prescription filled on July 15; and

"Whereas seniors on a fixed income do not significantly benefit from the income tax savings created by this user fee copayment or from any other non-health user fees; and

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the \$2 copayment fee will not compensate for the suffering and misery caused by this user fee, or the painstaking task involved to fill out the application forms; and

"Whereas the current Ontario Minister of Health, Jim Wilson, promised as an opposition MPP in a July 5, 1993, letter to Ontario pharmacists that his party would not endorse legislation that will punish patients to the detriment of health care in this province;

"We, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge the" PC "government to repeal this user fee plan because the tax-saving user fee concept is not fair, sensitive or accessible to low-income or fixed-income seniors; and lest we forget, our province's seniors have paid their dues by collectively contributing to the social, economic, moral and political fabric of Canada."

I agree wholeheartedly with this petition and I've signed my name to it.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is attacking workers' compensation benefits and the rights of injured workers; and

"Whereas Tory plans include taking \$15 billion from injured workers and giving \$6 billion to employers, including the government's rich corporate friends; and

"Whereas Cam Jackson, the former Minister without Portfolio with responsibility for gutting the WCB, refused to hold public hearings, choosing to meet secretly with business and insurance company representatives; and

"Whereas the WCB has about \$7.6 billion in assets and its unfunded liability has been steadily shrinking; and

"Whereas the Jackson report and WCB legislation are just part of a coordinated attack on occupational health and safety protections for working families in Ontario; and

"Whereas Tory plans also include abolition of the internationally respected Occupational Disease Panel; and

"Whereas the government needs to hear the message that taking money from injured workers and lowering incentives for employers to make workplaces safer is not the way to make Ontario a better place to live;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold full, province-wide public hearings on WCB reform; to listen to the voice of the people calling for improved occupational health and safety protection; and to tell the Tory government to call off its attack on the dignity and standard of living of injured workers and their families."

This is signed by a number of constituents from my riding. I agree with the petitioners and I've affixed my signature to it.

#### SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I am pleased to present yet another petition, from the community of Barrhaven in my constituency, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the community of Barrhaven lacks any secondary schools to educate the large number of students living in this area;

"Whereas Barrhaven is the most rapidly growing community in Ottawa-Carleton;

"Whereas the National Capital Commission's greenbelt severs the community of Barrhaven from Nepean, forcing many students to take potentially dangerous, unsupervised, hour-long trips on public transportation in order to travel to school;

"Whereas Nepean's high schools are significantly overcrowded;

"Whereas both the Carleton Board of Education and the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board have undertaken significant cost-saving measures to help reduce the construction costs of these high schools;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge the Minister of Education to recognize the unique educational needs of" Barrhaven and "Nepean and provide the funding required to build both of the proposed high schools for Barrhaven."

Because I am in agreement, I have affixed my own signature thereto.

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final

report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a petition from hundreds of people in my riding and across Toronto about the cuts to the health care system which reads:

"Whereas proposed cuts in transfer payments pose a threat to Canada's national health care system; and

"Whereas, despite Mike Harris's promise on May 3, 1995, of 'no cuts to health care spending,' his November 29 economic statement contains '\$1.3 billion or 18% cuts to hospital spending over the next three years, and a further \$225-million cut from the health care budget'; and

"Whereas, despite Mike Harris's promise in the Common Sense Revolution that aid for seniors and the disabled would not be cut, his November 29 economic statement shows cuts to the Ontario drug benefits plan and threatens access to drugs based on ability to pay; and

"Whereas the late Supreme Court Justice Emmett Hall, the father of Canada's medicare system, stated: 'The only thing more expensive than good health care is inadequate or no health care'; and

"Whereas Ontario residents enjoy a one-tier health care system for all, regardless of financial status, without copayments or user fees;

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, call upon Premier Mike Harris and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to maintain and protect the health care provisions presently provided to all Ontario residents."

I affix my name to this petition.

#### SNOWMOBILE REGISTRATION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** It's a real pleasure to rise today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents Charlie Harper and Larry Davidson.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as well as the Minister of Transportation, Al Palladini; the Solicitor General, Bob Runciman; the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, Bill Saunderson:

"Whereas the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs continues in a significant way to contribute to the economy of Ontario;

"Whereas snowmobile clubs are very conscious of safe operation in conformance with regulations;

"Whereas snowmobile operators spend thousands of dollars on their machines and in fact on tourism in Ontario;

"Whereas these expensive modern machines usually have decals with names and other lettering on them;

"Whereas the current MTO-issued registration numbers are not complementary to the other lettering on the machines;

"We, therefore, petition the Legislature of Ontario to amend the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act, Revised Statutes of 1990, chapter M.44, regulation 804, section 23, subsections (3), (4) and (5), and allow the operators



to affix their own registration numbers at their own expense."

I think this makes common sense. I'm pleased to affix my name to it.

#### SCHIZOPHRENIA

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly.

"We, the undersigned, call on the Minister of Health to amend the Ontario Mental Health Act to ensure:

"That people suffering from schizophrenia and related disorders no longer face unreasonable barriers in their attempt to receive treatment in a psychiatric facility; and

"That patients being treated for schizophrenia and related disorders be allowed adequate time in hospital for treatment to be effective; and

"That a community treatment order be put in place for those with schizophrenia who need medical treatment to live in the community but are non-compliant and hard to treat."

I have hundreds of petitions here and I affix my name to this petition as well.

#### TAX REDUCTION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I have a petition from a number of citizens in my area. They're urging the government to stop the cuts to Ontario's poor and are urging Ontario citizens to express their conscientious objection to the tax cuts. The petition reads:

"We, the undersigned, request that the Legislature of Ontario not approve any tax cuts until the causes of poverty and unemployment in Ontario are dealt with effectively and until the province's debt and deficit are paid down."

I support this petition.

1520

#### PAROLE SYSTEM

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Progressive Conservative government has passed a resolution urging the government of Canada to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada to ensure that convicted murderers serve their entire sentences; and

"Whereas convicted first-degree murderers are allowed to apply to the court for a reduction of the parole ineligibility period; and

"Whereas victims' families must relive the horrors of the original crime through a jury hearing for this early parole and relive this every time the killer is given rehearings for early parole; and

"Whereas the provincial government must bear a large degree of the costs involved with a jury hearing;

"We, the undersigned, ask the Attorney General of Ontario to request the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada to reconsider his decision under Bill C-45 and to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada."

I endorse this petition and have signed it.

#### SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the 800,000 children who ride the school buses of Ontario are at risk and their safety is in jeopardy from unsafe drivers who are not stopping for school buses; and

"Whereas the current school bus law is difficult to enforce since not only is a licence plate number required but positive identification of the driver and vehicle as well, which makes it extremely difficult to obtain a conviction;

"Therefore, be it resolved, that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That private member's Bill 78 be passed. The bill doubles the existing range of fines for identified drivers and establishes vehicle owner liability.

"We ask for the support of all members of the Legislature."

I have affixed my name to this petition.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, Local 90, sent in by Roger Hardy, the president, and Roger Duchêne, the treasurer. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario; and

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

On behalf of my caucus colleagues, I add my name in support.

#### PAROLE SYSTEM

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Progressive Conservative government has passed a resolution urging the government of Canada to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada to ensure that convicted murderers serve their entire sentences; and

"Whereas convicted first-degree murderers are allowed to apply to the court for a reduction of the parole ineligibility period; and

"Whereas victims' families must relive the horrors of the original crime through a jury hearing for this early parole and relive this every time the killer is given rehearings for early parole; and

"Whereas the provincial government must bear a large degree of the costs involved with a jury hearing;

"We, the undersigned, ask the Attorney General of Ontario to request the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to reconsider his decision under Bill C-45 and to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada."

I'm happy to affix my name to this.

### SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Education promised that cuts to education would not hurt the classroom;

"Whereas the cuts to education have resulted in many of our very young children being housed in inadequate, poorly ventilated portables;

"Whereas the children who are housed in portable classrooms that occupy crowded school yards are educationally at risk and their safety is in jeopardy;

"Whereas the current moratorium on capital expenditures makes it impossible for some school boards to provide safe, comfortable learning environments for our children, thus adversely affecting the quality of their education;

"Whereas the government of Ontario has proposed that \$250 million be spent on building a superjail while withholding funds for necessary school construction;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Remove the freeze on capital expenditures to ensure that our children are educated in buildings appropriate to and conducive of learning, comfort and safety."

I add my name to this important petition. It was gathered by Ms Theresa McNeil, chairperson of the St Timothy Catholic school advisory council, but I note she speaks for many of the concerned parents around the province whose children are inadequately housed and educated in the classrooms of this province.

### SCHOOL BOARDS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further petitions. The Chair recognizes the member for Nickel Belt.

*Applause.*

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** He just got his hair done too.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I was having a bad hair day.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government is planning to make significant changes to the delivery and governance of education in this province; and

"Whereas we as parents believe that school councils should play an important role in education, with clearly defined responsibilities limited to their particular school communities; and

"Whereas we as ratepayers are extremely disturbed that consideration is being given to abolish school boards and eliminate decision-making by locally elected representatives,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the present structure of school boards within the province of Ontario continue to have a major role in governance of the schools to deal with the broad policies as advocates for the students in their community, to provide cost-efficient educational services and to be directly accountable to the parents and local ratepayers."

I'm pleased that I finally was able to read this petition.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION REFORM ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 PORTANT RÉFORME DE LA LOI SUR LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL

Mrs Witmer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 99, An Act to secure the financial stability of the compensation system for injured workers, to promote the prevention of injury and disease in Ontario workplaces and to revise the Workers' Compensation Act and make related amendments to other acts / *Projet de loi 99, Loi assurant la stabilité financière du régime d'indemnisation des travailleurs blessés, favorisant la prévention des lésions et des maladies dans les lieux de travail en Ontario et révisant la Loi sur les accidents du travail et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1527 to 1533.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Mrs Witmer has moved that leave be given to introduce a bill entitled An Act to secure the financial stability of the compensation system for injured workers, to promote the prevention of injury and disease in Ontario workplaces and to revise the Workers' Compensation Act and make related amendments to other acts.

Those in favour please rise.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Grimmett, Bill	Palladini, Al
Baird, John R.	Guzzo, Garry J.	Parker, John L.
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Pettit, Trevor
Bassett, Isabel	Harnick, Charles	Preston, Peter
Boushy, Dave	Hastings, John	Ross, Lillian
Brown, Jim	Hodgson, Chris	Runciman, Robert W.
Carr, Gary	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Carroll, Jack	Jackson, Cameron	Saunderson, William
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Shea, Derwyn
Clement, Tony	Johnson, David	Sheehan, Frank
Cunningham, Dianne	Jordan, W. Leo	Smith, Bruce
Danford, Harry	Kells, Morley	Snobelen, John
DeFaria, Carl	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Ecker, Janet	Leadston, Gary L.	Sterling, Norman W.



Elliott, Brenda	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
Fisher, Barbara	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Flaherty, Jim	Munro, Julia	Tilson, David
Ford, Douglas B.	Murdoch, Bill	Turnbull, David
Fox, Gary	Mushinski, Marilyn	Villeneuve, Noble
Froese, Tom	Newman, Dan	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gilchrist, Steve	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Young, Terence H.

**The Acting Speaker:** Those opposed will please rise one at a time.

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	Patten, Richard
Bartolucci, Rick	Grandmaitre, Bernard	Phillips, Gerry
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	Pouliot, Gilles
Boyd, Marion	Hampton, Howard	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, Elinor	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Christopherson, David	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len
Cleary, John C.	Martel, Shelley	
Cooke, David S.	Martin, Tony	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 66, the nays are 31.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. Minister, do you have a statement?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** No further comment.

### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (IMPAIRED DRIVING), 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (CONDUITE AVEC FACULTÉS AFFAIBLIES)

Mr Jim Brown moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to Impaired Driving Offences / Projet de loi 100, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les infractions pour conduite avec facultés affaiblies.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry? It is carried. Do you have a statement?

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to provide that a police officer may seize a motor vehicle or motorized snow vehicle driven by a person whom the police officer believes is committing an impaired driving offence. The police officer is required to give a written acknowledgement of the seizure to both the driver and the owner. If the driver is charged with an impaired driving offence and has previously been convicted of an impaired driving offence, the police officer may retain the seized vehicle until the charge is heard.

In all other cases the police officer may retain the seized vehicle for a period not exceeding 90 days. When the time period for retaining the seized vehicle has

elapsed, the owner or the owner's agent is entitled to recover the vehicle unless the driver has previously been convicted of two or more impaired driving offences and had the vehicle without the owner's consent.

1540

### FRANCHISES' ARBITRATION ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 SUR LES ARBITRAGES VISANT DES FRANCHISES

Mr Crozier, on behalf of Mr Chiarelli, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 101, An Act to provide for the Arbitration of certain Disputes relating to Franchises / Projet de loi 101, Loi prévoyant l'arbitrage de certains différends concernant les franchises.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** The Franchises' Arbitration Act, 1996, provides for the arbitration of disputes between the parties to a franchise agreement. It's intended as a viable solution to current disputes between franchisees and franchisers. The bill addresses the immediate need for a dispute resolution mechanism in the absence of comprehensive franchise regulatory control.

### GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

#### EXTENDED HOURS OF MEETING

Mr David Johnson moved government notice of motion number 11:

That, pursuant to standing order 6(b)(i), the House shall continue to meet from 6 pm to 12 midnight on December 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 12, 1996, at which time the Speaker shall adjourn the House without motion until the next sessional day.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to divide the time equally between the three parties.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Consent for divided time? Agreed? It is agreed.

**Hon David Johnson:** Good. This is a traditional motion to allow the House to debate the proceedings during the last two weeks in the month of December up until midnight, rather than 6 pm.

I would say, though, and I hope I share this with many of the members in the Legislature today, that we would prefer to be actually debating legislation and the business of the House, as opposed to extending the hours. I would take it for granted and government members would take it for granted that we are here to do the business of the province of Ontario and introduce legislation in the province of Ontario, and we'd prefer to be debating that legislation rather than how long we're going to talk. That being as it may, we will be apparently spending the rest of the afternoon on this motion to extend the sitting hours.

I will say that next week, during the extended hours, the government will be bringing forward the legislation

that's on the table at the present time, legislation to cut red tape in Ontario that is impeding business growth in the province, to encourage economic growth, to encourage investment in Ontario, to encourage job creation in Ontario. There is no question that over the past year we have seen job growth in Ontario. We have seen the growth of 127,000 net jobs in this province since this government has taken office.

Even more encouraging, over the past month we have seen the growth of some 10,000 jobs for the young people in Ontario. One of the unfortunate aspects of the job creation and the growth had been that the younger people in our economy had not been able to participate. In the rest of Canada there is a considerable loss of jobs for young people, but here in Ontario we're seeing a growth of about 10,000 jobs in the last month for young people. That's encouraging and I know that is a situation that would be shared by all members of this Legislature.

Beyond that, we will be debating legislation next week which will help us to balance the books of the province of Ontario. I'm sure all the residents of Ontario would share this government's commitment to balancing the budget, to making ends meet in this province over the term of this government. The legislation that we will be debating will help us to do that.

We will be debating a motion which will remove duplication and waste in governments — in this government but among municipal governments as well — because we believe the economy is best served, the people of Ontario are best served if the governments are most effective and efficient and focus on their business and their responsibilities and there is a clear delineation as to the responsibilities of each particular government.

To be more specific, some of the legislation that's on the table at the present time includes a number of bills: Bill 52, for example, is on the table. I would like to see it receive third reading before Christmas. I think we can accomplish that with the extended hours next week. Bill 52, out of the Ministry of Natural Resources, deals with the aggregate, petroleum and salt resource industries. It allows the Ministry of Natural Resources to develop compliance partnerships with the industry, for example, to hold the industry accountable for day-to-day site inspections. This, I think, will simplify government procedures, make government more efficient, and it will be less of a burden for the industry itself and hopefully lead to growth in that industry and job creation.

Bill 57, the Environmental Approvals Improvement Act, is a bill to bring improvements to the approvals process with regard to the certificates of approval in Ontario. It also deals with the repealing of the Ontario Waste Management Corp, which has been wound up.

Bill 61 is the first of a number of red tape bills, some eight red tape bills, introduced by this government to reduce the regulatory burden on our industries in Ontario, and to encourage their growth and job creation through those means.

Bill 61, for example, coming out of the Ministry of the Attorney General, deals in part with the office of the public guardian and trustee, makes the hearings more efficient, improves accessibility to that office and promotes better customer service. Certainly, all the members

of this Legislature would hope to see improved customer service out of not only that particular office, but out of the province of Ontario.

Bill 63, another one of the red tape bills through the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation will streamline three of the agencies associated with that ministry and improve the accountability of the boards associated with those agencies.

Bill 64, from the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, eliminates redundant procedures and reduces regulations that are unnecessary burdens to business.

Anything that will reduce the burden on our business community, provided there is protection, and there always has to be protection for the people of Ontario, provided there is appropriate protection, anything that will reduce the regulatory burden, the red tape on our business community will inevitably lead to those jobs among the youth and among all people in Ontario.

**1550**

Bill 65 out of the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism is another red tape bill that eliminates the red tape in the operation of the tourism agencies. There are a lot of important industries in Ontario, but I think we would all agree that the tourism industry in Ontario, when you look at the scope of the tourism industry from one end of Ontario to the other, east to west, north to south, surely is one of the most important industries, creating jobs for people all across the province. We're hoping through Bill 65 to simplify the procedures in that industry and help the tourist establishments to grow and create jobs.

Bill 66 out of the Ministry of Environment and Energy: Streamline the government process and provide more flexible operations of the boards administering a variety of acts — again job creation.

Bill 67 out of the Ministry of Health: To improve government efficiencies and remove barriers that hinder businesses and the institutional sector from competing in an increasingly competitive market.

These are the bills we will be debating next week and hopefully will receive approval through this Legislature.

Bill 69 out of the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services will simplify various procedures and remove barriers and inefficiencies, and remove unnecessary and obsolete regulations pertaining to, for example, private investigators and security guards — another industry and business in Ontario that we may not always think of, but one that is important.

Bill 81 is not a red tape bill, as the members opposite will know. Bill 81 is the redistribution act, the act that reduces the number of provincial politicians from 130 down to 103.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** It will affect the Tories.

**Hon David Johnson:** It will, I suspect, affect all three parties, but I must say to the member opposite that the boundaries were created at the federal level under the existing federal party, which is the Liberal Party. That is where the boundaries came from and we said, "Look, if 103 federal members will be able to successfully represent the province of Ontario after the next federal elec-



tion, then 103 provincial representatives will be more than adequately able to represent the people of Ontario in this Legislature after the next provincial election."

By reducing those 27 members from 130 down to 103, we show our willingness in this House to be part of the solution to the ills and the financial picture in Ontario. We show that if we're to ask the civil service to do better with less, if we are to say we have to restructure and downsize the civil service, shouldn't the politicians be prepared to participate in that solution as well? I think the answer is yes, we should. This bill will accomplish that and save millions of dollars to boot, some \$11 million right off the top in terms of the reduced number of elected representatives and more if we combine our electoral process with the federal government.

Now we get to Bill 82, a bill that we've been debating over the last three days, a bill that I sincerely hope we would see pass through this House. I have in my hand a letter with regard to Bill 82 dealing with the family support plan. There has been a problem, as we all know in this House, in the family support plan over the past number of years, a problem that we cannot turn a blind eye to, a problem that surely every member of this House would wish to address.

I have a letter which was written to the member for Sudbury East, I must say, and it comes from the Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears. This is a letter from the Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears, which means that there are fathers who are separated from their family, they're not paying the money they should be paying. This involves a tragedy, frankly, in many families, and there is an organization expressing concern about this. This organization calls itself the Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears.

They write on November 20 of this year to the member for Sudbury East, and they say that they are writing to express their disgust with the behaviour in the Ontario Legislature of the member for Sudbury East with regard to the second reading of Bill 82.

They go on to say, "May we remind you and your party" — and they're referring to the third party, the NDP, the party which was in power through the last term of government — "that we, the Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears, had to literally take picket signs to the homes and offices of the fathers who chose not to pay child support." They were not paying child support and this organization had to take pickets.

"May we also remind you that we picketed the Attorney General's office in June 1993, addressing the very issues contained in Bill 82. We did meet with the family support director shortly after that and were told that a bill similar to 82 would be passed by the NDP. Well," it says here, "it never did. Children are the individuals who suffered from the failure of your party," the NDP, "to pass this legislation."

It asks the rhetorical question, "Did you care?" It answers, "Not visibly. After all, children do not vote," is what this letter says. "In effect, nobody else voted for the NDP either." What else could one expect?

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** You're being provocative, Dave.

**Hon David Johnson:** Maybe this is provocative. I'm reading from this letter and this letter from mothers who

are concerned about receiving child care support payments is saying please get on with Bill 82, get Bill 82 passed through this Legislature, get those measures in place that will help those mothers recover those payments.

On Bill 82, we hope to complete second reading shortly, get it out to committee and get it back so that we can help those mothers who need to get those payments.

*Interjections.*

**Hon David Johnson:** I don't need to tell it to the Attorney General. He wants to see this through. He's not the one holding this up. We know who's holding this up.

Bill 84 is another bill we hope to debate. This is the Fire Prevention and Protection Act, another bill that's important to fire services in the province of Ontario. I know the Solicitor General wants to see this bill have its second reading and then go out and have consultation with the people of Ontario. We want to see consultation with the people of Ontario. I know the Solicitor General is consulting on a daily basis, but in particular on this bill, he would like to see this very specific bill go out and receive public hearings, both here in Toronto and across Ontario. We expect to get some very good input across Ontario.

Bill 86: another bill for better local government. This is one to give municipalities more authority and greater flexibility to govern and deliver services effectively. It also introduces new ways of voting as well, to give municipalities more flexibility in that regard. Municipalities have been asking for more flexibility. We all know that municipalities have been asking for more flexibility for many years and I hope that we can join together. If we can't get together on Bill 82, if we can't get together on maybe some of the other legislation, I at least hope that on this, for the sake of the municipalities, we might get together.

1600

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I'd ask those two members to come to order. Your turn will be coming, and then I would like to hear from you. Right now it's this member's turn.

**Hon David Johnson:** We've only got just over 20 minutes left. I'm going to wrap up in a minute here anyway. I know we have two other speakers who wish to speak.

The Road Safety Act, Bill 92: Surely we agree on that, don't we? Don't we want to bring more safety to the roads of the province of Ontario? All right, let's have some applause for Bill 92 from all sides.

*Applause.*

**Hon David Johnson:** Good. Do I see all-party support for safety on our roads? Well, the Minister of Transportation has the answer, and the answer is Bill 92, to implement a safety rating system for the commercial carriers and improve safety on our streets.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Crozier:** You sure can whip us into a frenzy.

**Hon David Johnson:** I'm sorry. The frenzy is going to have to end.

I'd simply mention that there are other pieces of legislation, the Tenant Protection Act, for example. In my



days as the mayor of East York for many years, we had, and I'm sure we've all had this experience, many tenants coming to us in my capacity as mayor and saying that the maintenance laws of the province of Ontario are not adequate. The procedures municipalities must go through to ensure proper maintenance in apartment buildings is laborious, it's lengthy, it's time-consuming. By the time you go through it step after step after step — and it takes months — to correct the problems you correct, a whole new set of problems has started during that whole process. It's unending.

Bill 96, the Tenant Protection Act, will streamline that process, will offer a better resolution to municipalities to come to grips with the maintenance problems and to create and enforce the good housing conditions that the tenants of this province deserve. Besides that, it maintains protection for sitting tenants, tenants who remain, rent control protection in their units. That is a bill that deserves to have second reading, deserves to be out, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is insisting that we have further public hearings on this bill and that it be out there again and we get good advice from the tenants and the people of the province of Ontario.

Those are some of the pieces of legislation that we will be debating. This party, this government is here to work to debate those bills through the midnight sessions and get them passed and get them in effect for the people of the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Mr Speaker, are we dealing with everything in a block, or what? That's what I thought we were doing.

**The Acting Speaker:** There was unanimous consent to divide the time, but that was all that I'm aware of.

**Mr Wildman:** Fine, all right, so we will be doing a rotation, then. Thank you, Mr Speaker, because I was informed by the Liberal House leader we were doing it a different way.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Algoma.

**Mr Wildman:** As I rise to participate in this debate on the motion to extend sittings to midnight, I really have a feeling of *déjà vu*. I guess the phrase "*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*" really does apply here. It seems that every government of whatever political stripe, as it approaches the end of the session, is faced with myriad pieces of legislation that it has not yet passed which it must have passed before the Christmas break. After being in this place for a number of years, it's come to be part of the Christmas season for me that we have this kind of a motion before the House and we have the government House leader up giving a litany of the pieces of legislation that really must be passed by the government for one reason or another before the House can break for the Christmas-New Year holiday.

It really calls into question why governments are unable, it appears, to order their affairs in such a way that they can start introducing and debating pieces of legislation in September and October rather than coming to the end of November and saying, "Suddenly we've got to get this all done, because these are matters that must be dealt with immediately, before the end of the calendar year."

The government House leader mentioned a number of pieces of legislation, and I won't run through them all. He talked about Bill 81, which is out in committee and which the committee is dealing with, which is designed to redraw the boundaries and substantially cut the number of constituencies in this province without recognition of the geographic distances we have to deal with in rural Ontario, a piece of legislation on which I hope members of the government caucus will be able to get up, particularly those from rural Ontario, and say, "Look, we want to have a say in the legislation that affects the people of rural Ontario." I hope that committee will recommend change in the bill that is before it.

The government House leader also mentioned a number of other pieces of legislation, Bill 52 and Bill 57, both of which of course deal with protection of the environment, the so-called red tape bills which have been before the House for some time.

He also mentioned Bill 84, the fire services bill, which he said is something which must be got through so that we can have a consultation. I don't understand why the government has not consulted with the firefighters, the people who represent the firefighters, before designing this legislation. Why would they include in that legislation a provision prohibiting the right to strike for firefighters when firefighters have never withdrawn their services and never intend to? Surely it is like waving a red flag in front of a bull to do this. I guess what it means is that the government doesn't trust the firefighters to live up to their commitment to the people of Ontario, to the protection of people and property. It's too bad the Solicitor General doesn't have more respect for the people who carry out the work of protecting lives and property in this province.

The government also mentioned a number of other pieces of legislation, but I think it's significant that only one of the major ones was on the list he mentioned. He did mention the so-called Tenant Protection Act, which is a bill to gut rent control and to take away protection from tenants. He said the government is committed to holding two more weeks of hearings in Toronto and two weeks of hearings outside of Toronto, which is commendable. But the very fact that the government is calling it "tenant protection" really raises a lot of questions, questions about the sincerity of the government in dealing with the people of Ontario and, in particular, the tenants of Ontario.

I want to deal with a couple of other major pieces, actually three, and I'll deal with one of them in detail. One was announced today. The Minister of Labour introduced the workers' compensation bill, a bill that takes 5% of the benefits away from injured workers. It's just introduced today, the last week of November, a major piece of legislation that is going to affect the lives of some of the most vulnerable workers in the province — just today, and yet we have two other major pieces of legislation that the government has indicated they intend to proceed with, and we haven't yet seen the legislation. I don't know whether it has even been drafted. One is the reform to school boards and education, the restructuring of education in the province, and the other is the restructuring of municipal government in



this province, particularly as it relates to the GTA but also to the rest of the province. We haven't yet seen those pieces of legislation.

1610

I want to deal in particular with the education one. We have a lot of rumours. There are so many trial balloons being floated about changes in education that I'm considering not flying between my constituency and Queen's Park any more because I'm afraid that one of those balloons will get into the jet engine and we'll crash. It's not safe to fly around here with the number of trial balloons that the minister has been floating.

Apparently the minister is talking about a major restructuring. It appears that we're looking at reducing the number of school boards by about half. As one of his trial balloons, the minister has talked about perhaps the municipalities taking over some of the services that are now provided to students by school boards, whether it be administration, purchasing, maintenance of buildings or busing.

He's also apparently talking about a major restructuring of education finance as it relates to the property tax. There has been a proposal by the Who Does What committee that education would no longer be funded by the property tax on residences, that the province would take over that responsibility. That's a \$4-billion bill. Frankly, we support the change to take education finance away from residential properties, but we don't know what the details of this legislation will be because we haven't seen it.

There is a proposal for regional pooling of commercial and industrial taxation for financing education. This is going to produce a tremendous amount of controversy. There will be some winners and some losers. Some separate boards will get more funding, some rural boards will get more funding, but some will lose, not just urban public boards, and I think we need a major, proper discussion and an analysis of these kinds of changes.

The minister is talking about a major change to secondary school education and he has a sham of a consultation going on. We don't know exactly what he's going to finally propose.

There has been a study about changes to teachers' collective bargaining; perhaps the institution of province-wide bargaining for teachers; perhaps ending the right to withdraw services by teachers.

These are some of the things that have been proposed.

On top of all this legislation, we also have an indication that the government intends to bring in an economic statement that has been postponed — originally it was apparently going to be in November and now it's going to be some time next month — and that is going to take up some time in debate. I suspect it will be a major change because, despite the fact that the Treasurer said about a year ago there would be no further cuts, we now hear the Premier saying there's going to be \$3 billion more in cuts. Apparently \$1 billion of that will come from education and the rest, I guess, will be cut from municipalities, health care, social services and other services provided directly by the provincial government — major cuts.

All of these things are major changes that will produce significant and lengthy debate not just in this assembly

but across the province. The government has a problem. They have an agenda which is very, very ambitious, to say the least. It is very long. It cannot be completed between now and Christmas, even those few items — well, actually a lot — that the government House leader has said must be either gone through second reading or third reading before Christmas. This is a very ambitious agenda and one I'm afraid cannot be achieved even with midnight sessions.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I appreciate the opportunity to rise and to speak on behalf of this motion. I should say at the outset that I'm surprised we're even here debating this. My colleague the member for Don Mills came to our caucus the other day and said, "Would you, my caucus colleagues, mind sitting till midnight if that's what it took to get the job done?" I can tell you that every single one of my caucus colleagues stood up and said: "If that's what it takes to get the job done, we'll be here. We'll be here past midnight if that's what it takes." That's the type of dedication that members on this side of the House bring to our responsibilities.

I wondered why we would even have to debate this motion, that it wouldn't be so obvious and clear that all members would agree to do it just on a quick voice vote. I was surprised that the members in the third party wanted to debate this motion. Then I recalled that for the last year they were in government the House didn't even sit at all. Sitting till midnight never came into the equation. They couldn't find enough work to do Monday to Thursday until 6 o'clock despite the calls of all parts of the province.

If we're to have the opportunity to sit till midnight I think it's very important to put on the record: Why would we need to sit till midnight? One of the big reasons we need to sit till midnight is to discuss the Fewer Politicians Act.

The legislative committee dealing with that, the standing committee on general government, which many of my colleagues had the pleasure to serve on, visited a number of communities around Ontario to solicit input. We went around the province, came to my community of Ottawa and asked: "Do you believe we should have fewer politicians? Do you believe that in trying to balance what was an \$11-billion debt, what was strangling jobs and opportunity and hope in this province, in the context of balancing our budget politicians should lead by example, that before we start to say, 'Listen, could we ask you to run with a 2% reduction?' or before we ask this group, 'Could you handle a 5% reduction?' we had to demonstrate clearly that leadership would begin at the top?"

That's where it began. My colleagues and I firmly believe, as we did, I should say, during the recent election campaign, that having fewer politicians is one clear way of saying to the public that savings are going to start at the top. That's why we'd like to sit until midnight for the scheduled sitting days in December, so we'll have the opportunity to discuss this. We've sent the bill out to committee and we want to bring it back for third reading. Sitting until midnight would guarantee that all testimonies that were heard on the road will be reported back to this House so we can get this piece of legislation through well before the next budget, so the



public will say, "You're cutting yourselves later and cutting various other groups now?" No, we want to cut to lead by example right from the beginning. I think it's incredibly important that you start with yourselves.

Another very important piece of legislation that we'd like the opportunity to discuss, and this is a very big issue in my constituency, is Bill 82, the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996. I attended a meeting on Sunday about this with a good number of my constituents who asked me: "When will this bill pass third reading? When will you get this bill proclaimed?" I said I would come back here and put on the record their strong concern that we get Bill 82 passed as soon as possible and get it enacted so that it can benefit many families in Ontario.

I should point out that Bill 82 is intended to establish the Family Responsibility Office, protect the interests of children and spouses through the strict enforcement of support orders while offering flexibility to responsible payors and make consequential amendments to certain statutes. I should say, regrettably, they didn't have a copy of the letter read by the member for Don Mills. I think we want to get that piece of legislation —

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** We're waiting for the video they're sending on to me today. What did they say about the bill?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Member for Sudbury East, come to order.

**Mr Baird:** This piece of legislation attacks deadbeat parents who aren't living up to their obligations. It'll go after their driver's licence, it'll go after their credit rating and ensure that they meet their obligations in Ontario.

**Ms Martel:** How many cases did you pick up when you were there, John?

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Sudbury East, come to order, please.

**Mr Baird:** The other important reason we have to sit until midnight is Bill 84, the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. We saw last week a good number of firefighters, good, hardworking folks from across Ontario who came to Queen's Park and met with many of my colleagues. They had a very good session just downstairs, where they were able to tell us various concerns they have with respect to Bill 84. The Solicitor General had the opportunity to meet them, not only in this place when they were here but when he spoke to them the next day. As already indicated, he's open to listening to their concerns and how we can make Bill 84 a better bill. By passing that and sitting till midnight, we'll have the opportunity to get that piece of legislation to go to committee, and that's very, very important.

1620

Another bill we're waiting to hear about is Bill 92, the Road Safety Act, but we can't get Bill 92 finished this year unless we sit till midnight. Bill 92 promotes road safety by implementing a safety rating system for commercial carriers. I can tell you, a lot of folks in my community are very concerned with respect to traffic safety, particularly in the trucking industry. They want to know, how can we as a government make our trucking industry more safe in terms of road safety for everyone on the road? That's an important bill we'd like to get debated this fall session.

Another bill, Bill 93, the Good Financial Management Act, undertakes a whole host of initiatives designed to reduce the administrative burden and remove tax loopholes and redundant provisions and to make the tax legislation even easier to understand. I wonder why the members opposite wouldn't want to look at reducing the administrative burden, why they wouldn't want to debate making our tax legislation easier to understand. We're looking forward to debating that. We very much want to debate that this year.

**Mr Wildman:** We never said we were opposed to sitting to midnight.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Member for Algoma, come to order. Member for Durham Centre, come to order, please.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Let's stay here till midnight. Governments always want to stay till midnight.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Baird:** Another piece of legislation that would be great to have the opportunity to debate is the Development Charges Act that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing brought in yesterday. In my constituency our municipal government has led the way. They cut their development charges by 50%. Why would they cut their development charges by 50%? Do you know why? They cut their development charges by 50% because they wanted to encourage more construction, more development; they wanted to encourage more construction jobs; they wanted to allow families purchasing their first home to be able to afford it. As the minister reported yesterday, this piece of legislation could remove as much as 20% of the cost of development charges levied in many municipalities, allowing many in our province to realize the dream of home ownership, and that's something that's incredibly important.

Another issue which we'll want to get out for public hearings is the Tenant Protection Act. I've attended a town hall meeting in my constituency where folks gave me some input on how they'd like to see that direction go. I said I'll report that back to the House and have the opportunity for the committee process. Regrettably, we can't debate Bill 96 unless we have the opportunity to do so this year. That's why I think it's very, very important that we be able to go back to our communities, that we be able to go back and report to our constituents about what our activities are when the opportunity arose, when asked, would you be prepared to work a little harder to get a little bit more? I also ask my colleagues, would you be prepared to do a little bit more for a little bit less?

*Interjections:* Absolutely.

**Mr Baird:** Absolutely. That's the kind of report we want to be able to give to our constituents when the proposition came forward: Would you be willing to sit till midnight if that's what it took to get the job done? I can tell you that one of the big issues in my election campaign when I ran was that I said I would be a hardworking member of Parliament. I have no problem whatsoever with this motion, to agreeing to sit till midnight.

I look forward to my colleague from Essex county telling us whether he supports sitting until midnight.



**Mr Crozier:** I do.

**Mr Baird:** That's good to hear. I look forward to getting it on the record. He says, "I do," because he's a good fellow.

That we're debating this motion is absolutely unbelievable. Why would we be here debating whether we need to keep the House sitting until midnight in order to do the work we're all paid to do? This is something that I believe is very important. It sends a signal that the hard work is going to start right at the political level, because the hardworking people of Ontario, whether it's a pharmacist I spoke to the other day who says she's working harder, whether it's a small business person who said he's working even harder, whether it's a school teacher who says she's working harder — I think we've got to be very demonstrative that we're going to work harder and try to do more with less.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I too, like the member for Algoma, am very pleased to speak to this particular motion. I want to speak to it because I know I'm not the only member who's worried about what's before us. I know there are many people in Ontario who are very worried about the agenda that's before us and the agenda that's about to be coming as well.

The member for Algoma talked about education very briefly and talked about some of the problems that principals have with the system — not just principals, but teachers and parents in particular.

I went to a meeting out in Howard Park a couple of weeks ago where the member from High Park couldn't attend and we had the parliamentary assistant who came. I have to tell you that the parents at that particular meeting — there must have been 250 people there — and the teachers were horrified at the presentation, horrified at the response and angry about the process, because they said they received this booklet in late September and were told a response to that package was wanted by the end of November. We have never, ever introduced a major piece of work on education, which is very complicated to understand, and expected —

**Mr Baird:** This package?

**Mr Marchese:** That package there.

**Mr Pouliot:** That little garbage.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Pouliot:** Stick it in your ear.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon, come to order, please.

**Mr Marchese:** The member for Nepean, of course, is a bright light and a great intellectual so of course he's got no problems understanding that piece of work, but the teachers and parents at that meeting were very worried about what's contained in that booklet, because most of the parents simply don't have a clue.

First of all, they didn't get the booklet. Second, they got it very late. Third, they're given a very short time to respond to a very important piece on education that very much connects to them and to the education of their children.

They're angry about the process this government is engaged in, in terms of how it consults people in this province. They're angry because it doesn't consult with the public in the way it should. It pretends that it does. It

says you've got a month and a half to respond to this. And the member for Nepean says: "It's not so bad. This little booklet is not so difficult to understand."

I'm happy the member, this intelligent member, can understand it, but I tell you, a lot of the parents had a difficult time. Many of the parents in the city of Toronto, where I am from, said, "We have a hard time." This document was only produced in English and French, and many of the people we received come from many different countries and don't understand English as well as the member for Nepean, but he doesn't seem to care about that. They made very little effort to translate that document into other languages as it relates to Toronto, Metro in particular, but they don't care about that. As far as they're concerned, they've done their job: "The book was produced. Respond. If you don't, we've done our part." That's the way they consult.

On the issue of rent control, this government has the temerity, the gall, to call an act that is going to hurt every tenant in this province, 3.2 million tenants, the tenant protection package.

We went through four weeks of hearings where tenants and organizations that assist tenants said, "Please don't call this a tenant protection package, because it doesn't help us." They were incensed and offended that they should receive a document called the tenant protection package and there was nothing in it for tenants.

But what does this government do after it hears from them for four weeks? It introduces the same stuff and just calls it the Tenant Protection Act. It does it all over again, offends 3.2 million people all over again. It decontrols the rents, which means that every time you move you're going to be hit by an increase.

The economists who have done a report for these people said that 70% of all tenants move within a five-year period. That means that most of the 3 million tenants are going to be affected when they move. And in my question to the landlords about whether or not we would have rent increases, many of the landlords to whom I asked that question said there will be rent increases. These are landlords.

Mr Leach says: "Oh, no, there are not going to be any rent increases. Don't worry about it." We ask, if there aren't going to be any rent increases, why are you introducing this legislation? "Why?" is the question we ask, and "Why?" is the question the tenants have asked. Why introduce a bill if you say rents are not going to go up? But the landlords know better; in fact, they admit the rents will go up.

So 70% of all tenants will be affected once they move, and the sitting tenants are sitting ducks because while now the provisions allow for a 2.8% increase plus a 3% increase for capital repairs if they are approved, this government says: "That's not good enough. We want to increase that from 3% to 4% because the poor landlords need more money. Not only that, on top of that, we're going to pass on the tax increases and the utilities increases as well."

1630

Potentially the sitting tenant, who becomes a sitting duck, could have an increase of up to 10%. So they have no protection either. The Rental Housing Protection Act



is gone. This government says, "We need to give the landlord the right to do with his building what he wants." But guess what? When they do this and they tear down those buildings or convert them to condominiums, it means less rental accommodation for people who could afford them. They're tearing that down. They are not building. The private sector says: "We're not building. This is not good enough." The Rental Housing Protection Act is gone, tearing more good buildings down.

We just learned the other day about a study that has been done, that 36% of all tenants have an affordability problem. What does that mean? It means rents have gone up, wages have gone down, leaving 36% of all tenants affected. They have an affordability problem. What does this government do? They introduce an act that will hit tenants even more, taking more money out of the pockets of renters to pay the landlord, who in my view and in the view of any study I've seen has done well by all governments in terms of being in business as landlords.

We've very worried about what this government is introducing. One further worry I have is that this government announced through Mr Leach, the housing minister, that it wants one megacity. This very man a year and a half ago said, "We're going to get rid of Metro," and then comes back and says, "Oh no, we're not going to get rid of Metro, we're going to get rid of the cities in Metropolitan Toronto." Can you believe that? What are you to believe of a minister who at one point says, "We're going to get rid of Metro," and the next thing you know he says, "Oh no, we're going to do the opposite."

What are to say of a man who said, "Mr Leach responded to a question with characteristic bluntness by saying on the issue of market value assessment, 'My party and I will never support the imposition of market value assessment in Metro Toronto.'" What does he say a while later? "We're going to introduce actual value assessment." It's the same thing. When ministers do that they lose credibility. They have a problem.

People are worried because they're not being consulted. They're worried because at the drop of a pin this minister says, "We're going to change the structure of Metropolitan Toronto affecting 2.3 million and we're not going to consult you." It's a shameful act. It is undemocratic. It does not consult the public that's affected. It's a problem. You cannot govern in this way.

When Mr Leach realizes it's a problem, he says to the mayors: "You've got some more time. Go back and talk about it and come back and we'll talk about it later." Is that the way to act? It doesn't help the cities of Metropolitan Toronto; it doesn't help the public who want to have a say.

What are we to expect of this government? What's next? What's next, I dare say, is greater confusion, and when will it end? We want to debate that. This is coming. We're very worried.

I know my colleagues have much to add to this debate so I have said my piece in this regard and leave it to my colleagues to continue.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** The people in Kitchener riding are looking at us debating this today and they think we're rather foolish. They think we're foolish for having to sit until midnight. They don't see that we

can accomplish anything by sitting till midnight. But when I explained to them that that was the democratic process, that we wanted the opposition to have time to debate the bills, they could appreciate that but they still think we're a little foolish.

One of the bills that it is so important to pass, and I realize the opposition wants its time to debate this, is the redistribution act. We campaigned on reducing the number of members in the Legislature. We campaigned on that. Originally we said we were going to cut it to 99 members, but because of the federal boundary changes it will be 103.

**Mr Baird:** Blame the feds. They increased it,

**Mr Wettlaufer:** The federal Liberals, that's correct. The federal Liberals have increased the number of members in the federal Parliament from 99 to 103 and to save money for the Ontario taxpayer we will use the same boundaries.

**Mr Baird:** How much money?

**Mr Wettlaufer:** We will save millions, \$11 million for sure. We know that; we know \$11 million at least. Each election will save \$11 million.

We understand there are some members who do not want to have a reduction. They are more interested in their own situation than they are in the interests of the taxpaying public. However, if the federal government can run Parliament with 103 members from Ontario, there is no reason why we in the Ontario government can't run it with 103 members.

In addition, we want to pass a law on road safety. I have a hard time understanding how anyone can argue against that, especially when we saw over the last five to six years the number of vehicles, the number of trucks in particular that were losing tires, losing wheels. I know the previous transportation minister would like to lay claim to having credit for this, I'm sure, but we want to change this. We don't think anyone should be injured as a result of wheels flying off trucks.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Member for Nepean, come to order.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** We also have to introduce a financial bill —

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon, come to order.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** — to implement provisions of the 1996 budget. Now they're technical amendments, but we're going to remove some loopholes and that —

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Kitchener, take your seat for a moment. Point of order.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** It's a very quick point of order I have. Would you please keep the other members quiet? I want to hear what's happened to St Mary's hospital in Waterloo.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much. In fact I would ask all members to try to keep the noise level down and come to order. Thank you. Go ahead, member for Kitchener.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Madam Speaker, I don't think that was a point of order.

**Interjection:** You're not the Speaker.



**Mr Wettlaufer:** But I'm not the Speaker, that's correct.

We also would like to pass the Development Charges Act. It doesn't seem that long ago that I was a young married man —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** — and I was interested in buying my first house, and I remember how difficult it was to fund that first house.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon, come to order, and the member for Nepean, come to order, please.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Over the past 10 to 15 years, the situation has got worse for young married couples to try to find the funding for a new house when the development charges that were being implemented by the municipalities were going higher and higher, such that if we pass this law, it will save 15% perhaps on a house. In some ridings that could save as much as \$30,000, \$40,000 or \$45,000 on someone's first house. That is a lot of money.

**Mr Pouliot:** It must be a big house.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Well, in Toronto a lot of houses cost that kind of money, but you coming from northern Ontario where you have the benefits of low property values —

**Mr Pouliot:** The benefit of low property values?

**Mr Wettlaufer:** — you perhaps don't realize how much it costs for a piece of property in the Metro area.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the member for Kitchener speak to the Chair, please. Member for Lake Nipigon, come to order.

1640

**Mr Wettlaufer:** There are a number of laws we want to pass to eliminate red tape. One of them has to do with the elimination of red tape in so far as it affects business. I think everyone realizes that jobs should be the first priority of this government. That is what we're trying to do in eliminating this red tape. We're eliminating red tape to businesses so that businesses can provide the jobs that everybody in this province wants. There are a lot of unemployed people out there. Granted, it's much less than it was a year and a half ago — 135,000 fewer than it was 18 months ago — but there are still a lot of unemployed people who want jobs. Businesses will provide the jobs if we eliminate the red tape.

That's all I have, Madam Speaker.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I'm going to take a few minutes to go through this particular motion and then simply put —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Cochrane South, before you proceed, take your seat just for a moment. Order, please. Could all members come to order. Let's keep the noise level down just a little bit more so I can hear the debate. Thank you.

**Mr Bisson:** The government is bringing forward this motion today for a very simple reason: because they have not been able to get their agenda through the Legislature of Ontario. They have an agenda that is huge. They have

many pieces of legislation they wish to pass within the Legislature so they can impose their will and their vision of how they see Ontario on to the citizens of this province. Quite frankly, a number of us within the Legislature, especially in the opposition, have some great problems with some of the things the government is doing.

For example, one of the pieces of legislation this government would like to get at least to second reading some time before Christmas is the changes they're making to the Workers' Compensation Act. These aren't changes; they are taking the current Workers' Compensation Act, chucking it out the door and coming in with a new piece of legislation called something else. What is this legislation going to do? This legislation, for the people living in Cochrane South, Timmins, Iroquois Falls and Matheson, is going to have a very direct effect.

One of the things it's going to do is take \$15 billion worth of benefits from workers across this province over the next number of years directly out of their benefits, directly away from voc rehabilitation, directly away from services that injured workers need to safeguard their ability to get fair access to compensation. To do what? So they can give their corporate friends a huge shift in downward assessment so that they pass on \$6 billion and give it to their corporate friends in the boardrooms across Ontario. All because of what? Because this government says: "We don't care about injured workers. We think that injured workers are getting too much and we want to put those savings on to the employers of this province, the special interests that represent this government."

The other thing they're going to do has a really direct effect for the people of Timmins. I come from a community that is very much a mining community. Over the years we have literally filled our graveyards with people who have worked in the mines and died from industrial diseases. Many people, former members of the United Steelworkers of America like Moe Sheppard, Omer Séguin, myself and others, have worked for years to get the Industrial Disease Standards Panel to recognize particular diseases as being caused by working underground, such as lung cancer and others.

The IDSP is responsible for looking at, in a scientific way: Is there a relationship between your work exposure and your cancer? The IDSP takes a look at that and if it says yes — in this case it has — there is a relationship, the changes are done to policies so that injured workers, in this case diseased workers, or many times the widows and survivors, the children, can get access to compensation. This government is throwing all that away. It means that in Ontario, once this legislation is passed, it will be virtually impossible for injured workers who happen to be diseased because they worked in mines to get justice.

I say, as the representative from Cochrane South, a community that comes from mining, shame on you, because what you are doing is immoral. I invite you to come to the cemeteries in Kirkland Lake, the cemeteries in Timmins, the cemeteries in South Porcupine. Our cemeteries are full of dead miners. What you are doing is turning the clock back more than 50 years to be able to give a break to your employer friends, and I say that's wrong.



To boot, you have the nerve, you have the audacity, to turn around to the widows, the people who are the survivors of those diseased miners, and their children and cut their benefits by 50%. I say to you that is totally immoral. These people didn't ask for their husband or their father to die; they died of an industrial disease caused by working underground. This government says, "This is good business stuff. This is how we attract investment into the province of Ontario," on the backs of the widows, on the backs of the kids. That's the price you want people to pay to live in Mike's Ontario. I say, that's not the vision of this province. I say, shame on this government.

They are also going to make changes to what is referred to in the field as WCAT, the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal. Most people watching at home who look at the Workers' Compensation Board may think this is not a big deal. But what WCAT does is simply this: If you were an injured worker in the province and you were trying to get justice to the particular claim you had before the board and the policy didn't fit, in other words, you claim for compensation because something happened to you while working and you're saying you're not able to work or you have some kind of impairment because of that accident or whatever it might be and the policy doesn't fit, you bring your claim through the appeals process until finally you get to an independent Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal that has three members on the board: one representative of workers, one representative of the employer and the chair. They look at the facts based on law, and from there they make a decision. If the board policy is wrong, the policy is changed.

That is, quite frankly, one of the ways we were able to get lung cancer and other industrial diseases and many other injuries policies changes within workers' compensation so that workers, when they're injured, can get justice. The government laughs. They think this is funny. But what this means to say is that it will be virtually impossible for workers to be able to get justice through the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, because who's going to control it? It's going to be Mike Harris and it's going to be the Minister of Labour. It's going to be the cabinet of Ontario which is going to decide, because it controls the board, what the policy of the board is going to be, and workers will have absolutely no say, because what you're doing is you're saying the WCAT can't rule on anything outside of the policy of the board, that it only can see if the board has properly conducted itself in regard to the policy, and I say that's wrong.

The whole purpose of the WCAT is the same as a court: You look at what has happened, you look at the evidence, you look at the precedents, you look at it all, according to the policy of the board, and you make a decision. If the policy is wrong, it is adjusted.

I have literally hundreds and hundreds of widows in the city of Timmins who would have never got justice from the Workers' Compensation Board if WCAT had not been allowed to make the decision that it did in regard to a number of claims. What you are doing, you're going to make it impossible for those people in the future

to get justice if such cases happen again, which they will, and I say to this government, you are wrong.

The other thing this government is doing is that it would like to bring forward another piece of legislation some time before Christmas and pass it into law, and that is the law that speaks to reducing the representation in northern Ontario by five MPPs.

**Mr Pouliot:** One third.

**Mr Bisson:** One third of the MPPs. The government stands here as if it's a virtue somehow to be able to reduce politicians, because politicians, after all, according to the Tory members, are a bad thing and we should get rid of them. But I tell you, as a member coming from northern Ontario, we have had problems for years, no matter the government, under the government of Bill Davis or others, in making sure that our voice in the north is able to be strong, is able to be loud and is able to be listened to not only within the Legislature but within the cabinet of Ontario.

When the government says it's going to reduce the number of representatives in northern Ontario by five, it is going to become more difficult for the north to find its voice at Queen's Park. I say to this government, there used to be a movement in northern Ontario about 10 or 15 years ago by Mr Deibel, if I remember the name correctly, who went around the province in the north and tried to get people to sign petitions to separate northern Ontario from the rest of the province. I don't subscribe to that; I believe we are one province.

But the thing you're doing with the changes you're making in the legislation, by reducing representation, all of the cuts you're doing that are willy-nilly, not looking at the realities of northern Ontario with regard to geography, the cuts that you are making at the Ministry of Transportation in regard to highway maintenance, there are more and more people in northern Ontario who are saying: "The Harris government does not speak for me. I don't, as a northerner, see myself in the vision of this government." More and more, they're becoming not happy with the agenda of this government, to the point that, quite frankly, people may start talking about at one time trying to form their own province.

**1650**

I don't think that would be a positive step, but I say to the government, you are encouraging that movement. I say to the government, you're wrong. You should do what you were elected to do, which is to govern for all the people of Ontario to make sure that no matter where you come from, either northern or central or southern Ontario, the cabinet of Ontario makes decisions for the betterment of all those regions. I say you are driving the north and you are driving others outside of the province of Ontario away by droves, and in the end nobody's going to be the better.

With that, I'd like to thank you for having this opportunity of debate.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** It's indeed my pleasure to rise to finish the last couple of minutes of debate for the government side on I think a very important motion that's before us here today. As we've just seen demonstrated very passionately on the other side, members opposite have lots to say about the bills in



question, a very extensive list of bills is before this House for second and third reading.

I find it intriguing that they could stand here today and make the kind of cases they make, yet suggest that we shouldn't have the opportunity to continue this debate with the fulsome opportunity provided by going to midnight sittings, something they did every single year that they sat. I would note that they didn't sit at all the last year they were in office, but in those years that the Legislature was allowed to sit, we always had midnight sittings both in the spring and the fall sessions.

I'd just like to touch very briefly on two bills. The first is the Fewer Politicians Act. I was privileged to sit in on the committee hearings that have criss-crossed the province. We've heard well over 100 representations from people who commented that while there were two camps, I think there was a concession from all parties that there was a need to look at riding redistribution, there is a need for that analysis every 10 years on how the population shifts within Ontario and there is a need to make sure there is fairness in the way that we come forward as representatives of the voters back in our home ridings.

There is no doubt that the status quo, which sees the riding of Rainy River have only 19,000 voters and yet the riding of York Centre boast 129,000 voters, six and a quarter times the number and growing at a remarkable rate — there is no one in Rainy River, not one person who would stand up and look you in the eye and suggest that their vote should carry six and a quarter times the weight of a vote of somebody in Woodbridge. Something closer to fairness was generally conceded by all three parties. There are specifics that we continue to debate, but that's exactly why we want the opportunity to have midnight sittings, to ensure we have the time to dedicate to that bill and all the other bills.

The only other bill I'd like to mention very briefly is the Boxing Day act. It stands to reason that we would like to see that bill passed before December 26, given that the intent of the bill is to provide the opportunity to local businesses to make the decisions on how they wish to serve their customers. The bill continues to extend protection to workers who choose not to work on that day, who choose to maintain an extra day's holiday, but for those who want the extra day's pay, for the businesses that want to be part of the regrowth, the restimulation of the Ontario economy, they'll have that opportunity.

I thank you for the privilege of speaking.

**Mr Bradley:** Thank you for the opportunity to address the House on the issue of extending the hours of debate to midnight every night, that possibility being that the House will sit to midnight every night for the first two weeks of the month of December.

What everyone always asks is why the government doesn't introduce its controversial legislation at an earlier time. I should say from the beginning that I'm always delighted to sit till midnight. I'm delighted to sit to midnight any time, which must tell you something in itself. I do have other things to do from time to time, I want to say that.

I am a person who believes that it is fine to sit, but I want to deal with the issue of why the government is in

this predicament. The reason the government is in this predicament is that it insists on bringing in controversial legislation near the end of the period of time we call the fall session or the spring session. When they bring that legislation in late and try to get an undertaking that it be passed quickly, we find that there is some opposition from the official opposition, the third party and the general public.

I understand the government wants to ram through as much legislation as possible. This is a revolutionary government. This is not the Davis administration. This is not the Conservatives of old. This is not the Conservatives of Jean Charest or at least his predecessor. This is not the Conservatives that you are talking about there. We are talking about the Reform Party sitting on the other side. I know the member for Grey-Owen Sound squired the Reform Party leader around his riding and signed the membership. I read that in the Owen Sound Sun Times.

It's always interesting to read the newspapers from various places across the province. Even though they tried to cut those newspapers out in the legislative library, I still get clippings from time to time, and whether it's the Owen Sound Sun Times, or the Sarnia Observer where the Conservative member for Sarnia, Mr Boushy, is denouncing the Minister of Health, or it's the member for Grey-Owen Sound denouncing everybody in the government, or whether it's the member for Scarborough East denouncing the town council of Cobourg, no matter who it is denouncing somebody, I read about it in the newspapers. I understand there's some considerable opposition even within government.

Let me tell you why bills take a certain period of time and why it's worthwhile on some occasions that they do. You all remember the legislation dealing with video lottery terminals. These are the electronic slot machines that the government wishes to place in every bar, in every restaurant, in every neighbourhood in the province of Ontario.

Why does the government want to do this? Why did the government want to rush this legislation through despite widespread opposition? I noticed a lot of people in the government benches had the flu that day. Why did the government want to rush that through? Because of the tax cut. They have to get some money to make up for the tax cut, and so they pressured the opposition. They wanted this bill to go through.

The Premier piously stood before the House and then before a media scrum outside the cabinet office and said, "Well, you know, we really don't intend to put them in bars and restaurants." I thought: "Well, this is a breakthrough. This is good news. The government has relented." Yes, they're putting them in these casinos. I'm not talking about the big casino in Windsor or Niagara Falls; I'm talking about the various casinos you want to put all over the province. Yes, they're going to do it there. Yes, they're going to put it in racetracks. Yes, they'll be in the large casinos, all of those places. I'm no fan of gambling in any of these places, but at least they were controlled places.

So I said: "Well, how can we help the Premier out? How can I help the Premier of this province?" I always



am looking for ways to help the Premier out, and I will try a few years from now to help him out as well. But I stood in the House with an amendment and I said to the Premier, "If you truly do not want them in every bar and every restaurant and every neighbourhood and every street in Ontario," somehow I could help him out with an amendment. The amendment would read that they cannot go in bars and restaurants.

But I saw the lobbyists for the Ontario Restaurant Association, the restaurant and bars hotel association and other lobbyists outside rubbing their hands, waiting for the bill to come through. I saw the Premier on television. He was at a fund-raiser and he was saying members should be back voting for this. Some of them, as I say, had the flu because they didn't agree with this particular legislation.

Why did the opposition take additional time on that bill? It was because we truly believed that it would be detrimental to the province. And what we achieved, if anything, was centring some public attention on the issue and having the Premier suggest that perhaps they wouldn't move quickly into the bars and restaurants. Make no mistake, that's where they want it. Why do they want it? Because of the risky tax scheme this government's embarking upon.

1700

Today I saw the Dominion Bond Rating Service — hardly a bastion of socialism or ultraliberalism; I always found these people to be pretty conservative. We in the opposition kept telling the government backbenchers, "No matter what the whiz kids in the Premier's office tell you, no matter what the cabinet tells you, and some of those people know better, you're going to have to borrow the money to give a tax cut." The Dominion Bond Rating Service today recognized that when dealing with the budgetary policies of this government.

All the people who believed it, all the people who said, "Those people in the cabinet must be smart; otherwise they wouldn't be in the cabinet" — of course, that isn't necessarily true, as we all know. Particularly those who are not in the cabinet would know that. I sat in the cabinet and I know if I could sit in the cabinet surely that wasn't —

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** We rest our case.

**Mr Bradley:** You may rest your case, as you say, but what I'm pointing out to the members of the government back benches is they gave you this line that somehow, Conservatives all, you wouldn't have to borrow money to give a tax cut. But I look at it. It's very simple. If you are running a deficit and you don't have the money to give a tax cut, then you have to borrow the money to give a tax cut.

How that makes any sense at all, I don't know, because I see some real right-wingers in the government caucus, I see some sensible, moderate right-wingers in here, some of whom counselled the government on this. I look across the floor at some who counselled the government: the member for Wellington — a very moderate individual; the member for Grey-Owen Sound — not moderate but certainly a person who's sensitive to the real needs of many people in this province; the member for Lakeshore, Morley Kells, who

writes columns in the Toronto Star from time to time that are just excellent and I commend them to you for your reading; the Speaker of the House, the Honourable Chris Stockwell, member for Etobicoke West. All of them said: "You know, Premier, this isn't a good idea. This will not add up because one of two things is going to happen. We're either going to have to cut more deeply or we're not going to be able to deliver on our bizarre tax scheme."

One thing I will say is that you haven't delivered on the tax scheme. Some people would say: "Isn't this awful. You should be up denouncing the government because they're taking so long to implement it. They're delaying it." A lot of people forget that. I'm not condemning you for that, because I'm saying you're simply facing the reality that the opposition brought to your attention, and that is that you can't meet your fiscal targets, your deficit elimination targets, without making even more drastic cuts. So they'll be closing hospitals in Warton and Owen Sound and Oakville and Sarnia. I see they're closing one of the hospitals in Sarnia and they're doing something to the hospital that's just outside.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** We've got one in Owen Sound.

**Mr Bradley:** You never know, Bill. They might close it in Owen Sound as well. You see, when you reply to the interruptions, then the member gets his name in the Hansard and I always want the member for Grey-Owen Sound to get his name in Hansard from time to time.

Anyway, here's the Dominion Bond Rating Service today and what do they say? This is a bastion of conservatism, I believe. They say the following: "The tax rate cut is the single largest challenge to the government's balanced budget objective. The 1996 budget estimates annual forgone revenue from full implementation of the provincial income tax rate cut at \$4.8 billion. Dominion Bond Rating Service estimates that the equivalent of 88% of the increase in tax revenue resulting from economic growth over the next three years will be required to finance the tax reduction."

Let me read that sentence again because this is very key: "The 1996 budget estimates annual forgone revenue from full implementation of the provincial income tax rate cut at \$4.8 billion. Dominion Bond Rating Service estimates that the equivalent of 88% of the increase in tax revenue resulting from economic growth over the next three years will be required to finance the tax reduction."

It goes on to say, "This is an ambitious and difficult schedule to implement," talking about the whole process. So what's going to happen is you're going to have to borrow the money plus you're going to have to make deeper cuts.

When I look at members, particularly from the rural ridings, and see some of the services that are cut — I know, for instance, that senior citizens and others who have to access the Ministry of Transportation offices now have to go many miles. When they're taking some tests they have to go to, the driver examination centres are gone in so many places and these people have to go to other municipalities where they're not familiar with the roads to take the tests as you centralize. That is a consequence again of the foolish tax scheme that you got into



and that the backbenchers used to applaud. I note now that the applause is much more muted than it was in the past.

When we're looking at the pace this House moves at and why we're into additional sittings till midnight, we look at how quickly the government is moving. Does the government have a mandate? Of course it does. Was the government elected? Yes, it was, not with over 50%, but that's the accepted process; the government got about 46%.

**Mr Chudleigh:** In Halton North it was 65%.

**Mr Bradley:** It was 65% in Halton North says the member for Halton North. We know that's a definite swing riding. We can expect that to go back the other way next time. But when we look across the province we see that the government was elected with about 46% of the vote. I accept that because I've always respected the viewpoint as expressed by the voters on election day. That is a decision they make.

You look at it and you say 46%, though, is not 50%, so the government should be widely consulting, the government should be proceeding, as true Conservatives do, with caution and care. Instead, we've got the bulldozer out, we've got the Reform Party bulldozer out and the government is attempting to engage in the wrecking of many of the institutions in this province that my friend from Brockville helped to build. I know he was a strong supporter of Suncor and he was a strong supporter — I may have this wrong. I'm sorry, I may have this wrong. He was part of the government, I know that. At least I can say that. He was part of the government.

What I want to say to you is that the government in my view and I think in the view of many people in this province is moving far too quickly, far too drastically and not looking at the consequences of its actions. With more thought, with more consultation, with more consensus, this government would find that much of the opposition to some of its initiatives would disappear or at least be far less than it is today.

I worry about my colleagues on the government side and this side who will have hospitals closing, because I can't remember one Conservative candidate anywhere in the province who ran on a mandate of closing hospitals, yet I see the government heading around with its commission closing hospitals. Three out of five in Thunder Bay, two out of three in Sudbury, two out of three in the Sarnia area are in effect either closed or drastically changed, and I don't recall any Conservative candidate talking about that. That will come back to haunt you.

I was re-reading a chapter in the book *Boom, Bust and Echo*, because I wanted to look at the medical field and see what he had to say. One of the things the author said was that governments should be cautious when moving towards the closing of hospitals. He didn't deny that there would be a need for changing the delivery of medical care in some circumstances. I think a lot of people accept that. We want to see more home care. We recognize there are advances in surgery and technology. But he said, "Do not proceed quickly to close hospitals, because you'll be scrambling 10 or 15 years from now to reopen them." Why? You simply look at the demographics. That's what his book deals with when he says *Boom, Bust and Echo*. He's talking about the demographics of this province.

1710

You people are forgetting that the population is aging and that, on average, all of us will need to access hospitals far more as we get into advanced ages than we do perhaps at the present time in many of our circumstances. That is a fact of life. What are you going to do? You're going to close hospitals. Why are you doing it? In some cases I think there's a genuine concern out there that we look at efficiency, and I accept that, but in so many of the cases it's driven by the foolish tax scheme and trying to make the further cuts. Any conservative economist will tell you — it's in the conservative economists' textbook — that if you cut drastically at the same time that you are cutting taxes, the effect is a constraining effect on the economy, not an expanding effect.

I've talked to the Tory — I shouldn't say Tory — small-c conservative economists and every one of them tells me that's the case. You have to check with two or three or four or five. To say, "Is this just one person?" no, it isn't. I think of Dr Joseph Kushner, Brock University, who I consider to be a very conservative economist, who certainly says that and who on St Catharines city council moved a motion asking that the provincial government not implement its 30% tax cut, because he saw the consequences of that.

I look at another thing we see as the government proceeds and wants to get the legislation through quickly. The term a "bullying" government has been used. I think there's perhaps a truth to that. It's certainly an intimidating government when I looked at — and as I say, I was reading the paper the other day — the harsh comments of the member for Scarborough East about the Cobourg council. I don't know what it was about, but they were not approving his development or something like that.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Come on, Jim.

**Mr Bradley:** What was it about?

**Mr Gilchrist:** Point of order.

**Mr Bradley:** You get up on a point of order and tell me what it was about.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** A point of order? First of all, you're not in your seat.

**Mr Bradley:** He's got to be in his seat. I'll give him a chance to get into his seat because I want to hear what this is about. I just read the newspaper.

**Mr Gilchrist:** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I would ask the member to withdraw the comment. He himself admitted he had no idea what he was talking about, and to just —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. This is not a point of privilege. Please take your seat. The member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** What I'm talking about is the general attitude of the government towards others. I read in the Cobourg newspaper that the member had spoken harshly of the Cobourg council. I would be afraid if I knew that a person who had been on the planning committee was talking about that, or a government member. When a government member speaks about these matters, particularly one who is as influential as the member for Scarborough East, the former president of the Conservative Party and a high-ranking member of the government caucus, that's when I get worried. Anyway, I will, in



consideration of the member, go to something else because I know he's offended by this and I wouldn't want to offend him this afternoon, and instead look at what the government is doing.

I look at the district health councils. I met with them the other day, representatives of the district health council and our local restructuring commission. They've done a good job of consulting. They've gone across the Niagara Peninsula and looked at all of the services that are needed and some of the services they believe may not be needed, and they've taken a very careful look at the circumstances facing health care delivery in the Niagara region. Unfortunately, they start from the premise that the government is going to deliver some \$38 million less in funding for local hospitals than would have been the case previously. So when you say to them, "Would you come forward with a plan?" that motivates them to want to close hospitals. It's engaging in what I call crackpot realism. In other words, the realism is that this government, to finance its tax cut, is going to reduce expenditures on hospitals by \$38 million in the Niagara region. Therefore, they buy into this crackpot realism and say, "Well, if they're going to cut off our entire leg, I suppose we'd better cut ourselves off at the knee so they won't cut off the whole leg." So you have local people now doing your dirty work, if you will, by recommending the closing of hospitals.

I think we've got a good commission in our area. They've looked at a lot of needs. I respect the people on that commission. But the problem is that they start out by getting \$38 million less for the operation of hospitals in the Niagara region. We, particularly as an area that has more senior citizens than others, simply cannot sustain that.

The government is going around in many places silencing people. AMO is a great example. My mind boggles at the reaction of AMO to some things. But you talk to individual members of councils and they have a different story. I want to say this: The government is very good at delivering to their rich and powerful friends. That's a point that I think could be truly said to be true.

The other day the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing stood up and said, "Notwithstanding that municipalities incur considerable new costs when development takes place, we're going to restrict those municipalities and their ability to provide for development charges." Well, Hazel McCallion, certainly no shrinking violet, was quick —

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** And a good friend of yours.

**Mr Bradley:** A very good friend of mine — was very quick to point out the problem with this: that you're giving less money to the municipalities in transfer payments, far less to the municipalities. Then in the one area where they can tax, if we can say that, or provide for charges for the new services and established services, they're taking that away from them.

This indeed will cause a building boom in Ontario, because you're going to have to build huge halls to hold your fund-raisers because they'll be full of developers. Right behind them will be people from insurance and right behind them the other people for whom you are

doing favours: the rich and powerful in this province. So there will be a building boom, I will concede that, of new halls to hold your fund-raisers.

There's something else I wanted to talk about. This is a good opportunity. What you are doing with municipalities when you keep money away from them — and my friend the member for Grey, who used to be in municipal government back in the old days of severances, back in municipal government, will understand this — you are now, by denying municipalities appropriate funding, placing them in positions where they can't even defend their own interests, an appropriate interest.

In the Niagara area the regional council, in its lack of wisdom, against the advice of those who developed the official plan, totally contrary to the official plan of Niagara region, have approved a new residential and big-box commercial development just outside the city of St Catharines.

I've heard people say we must help our downtown areas, we must help the areas already established in cities to have good planning principles. What has happened? Niagara-on-the-Lake now has proposed a new development along the Queen Elizabeth Highway on lands, and I usually plead for the saving of agricultural land. This isn't even agricultural land. It was land specifically set aside for prestige industrial development, for instance, computer-type industries. What do they do? They want to slap houses way out into the countryside and big-box commercial.

The city of St Catharines, which opposes this and has developed a case against it, last night abandoned the case. I happen to disagree with St Catharines city council in abandoning that case, by the way, but I want to tell you why they did it. They didn't do it because of the lack of principle. They did it because of lack of money, because their anticipation was that the case would be costly, and there's no guarantee, of course, when you go to the Ontario Municipal Board, that you can win it.

In denying municipalities the funds they need you have a circumstance where you've got bizarre development taking place. The only hope is that somebody in the cabinet takes a look at this and says how bizarre it is. Let me tell you it's not because it's an adjacent municipality. If my own municipality, St Catharines, were proposing the same development I would be equally critical. There may be instances where that will happen. It's unfortunate, as I say, because they will not be able to defend their position only because they don't have the financial resources to do so.

1720

I heard it mentioned by the government House leader — let me go to something else. There's something else I raised, called Twenty Valley Estates, which is on the table lands of the escarpment, right adjacent to escarpment lands in the Niagara area. There's a new subdivision proposed for it. It's clearly outside the urban boundaries of the town of Lincoln, and what happens? It gets approval, again a bad planning decision. There's nothing more beautiful than the Niagara Escarpment. My friend from Grey-Owen Sound will agree with me. To see it annihilated, desecrated by development is most unfortunate.



There are lots of places where we should have development. I agree, it's good and I'm happy to see that kind of development take place and redevelopment take place. It's good for the province; it's good for our economy. But why would you take the Niagara Escarpment and start building subdivisions all over it? They're called prestige estate homes. I hope the cabinet hasn't made a decision. There are a couple of members of cabinet here today who I think are pretty sensible people. I hope they will look at this and say: "Here's a chance for a government to make a good environmental decision. Here's a chance for a government to look into the future and not simply for the quick profit that can be made."

One of the people who wrote to me about it is involved in the grape and wine industry. We've got a lot of people. I think the Tory caucus was down in the Niagara region, so they saw some of this kind of industry developing. What is really good is that people like seeing some rural lands and the wineries right there where the product is produced. That's a real inducement for tourism. There's a lot of money to be made in that. That's positive development. But simply to slap up more subdivisions is totally bizarre. I hope the cabinet, which has jurisdiction over this, will make a good decision and deny that particular development.

I have people now calling my constituency office, as I'm sure others do, who are being denied medical services. I know it's not easy when governments are in negotiations. I don't pretend it is. I'd never be unfair enough to say it isn't a difficult time. But when I see people who cannot get medical services from specialists and I see some further confinement of medical services I become concerned. I always hope, and I'm not on the inside of negotiations, there are sincere negotiations taking place between those who are withdrawing their services and the government to find a resolution to this problem. I hope that doesn't come out of the blood of the patients of this province. In other words, I hope this government doesn't engage in delisting of services.

Already we have new fees being implemented in hospitals where chronic care patients or those they wish to say are chronic care patients, senior citizens mostly, will have to pay a sum of I think \$40 a day. This is a new charge I didn't hear about. I listened carefully to what my Conservative friends said during the campaign. I didn't hear about that kind of charge. Those are seniors. We have a minister who's speaking for seniors, supposedly. I wonder why perhaps he didn't speak to the cabinet and suggest that this shouldn't happen, and other members who I think have a concern about senior citizens.

I see the red tape bills. They want those through quickly. Sometimes red tape is good; sometimes it's bad. I think regulations that are set up, for instance, to prevent you from being financially annihilated by quick sales people — driveway paving people and house repair people, for instance, we have regulations there. We have regulations which were put in place to protect the consumer and to protect the environment. That's what people forget when they start wanting to get rid of all of the regulations holus-bolus.

My good friend the member for Lincoln is in charge of the committee. I know he will want to be careful when he

removes those regulations that they aren't regulations which will hurt the environment by removing them. I know he wouldn't want to do that because he is a good friend of mine and he would want to listen carefully to that counsel.

Now you're moving forward with this bill on workers' compensation which is going to be detrimental to many of our vulnerable people in our society. As many have said, this isn't to suggest we shouldn't always be looking at the operation of the Workers' Compensation Board and seeing if it can be better run and more efficient. Everybody agrees with that. But what you have done is a penalty to people who, through no fault of their own, have been injured on the job.

In our area we need the worker adviser's office of the Workers' Compensation Board in Thorold because we have many people — I hear the government is going to close that, or could close it. I hope not. You're still the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour. He nods in a negative fashion that that isn't the case. I'll take his word and I'll look upon that joyously as his guarantee that the government will not be closing the office of the worker adviser in Thorold. I've taken that as his word and I will send that back to the local people, who will be delighted to hear that news because it's extremely important.

**Mr Baird:** Our bill does not close it. Our bill does not do that.

**Mr Bradley:** He's now saying the bill doesn't say that. Well, that's interesting to hear.

I see that you are cutting some 600 jobs from the Ministry of Transportation in the inspection field. I'm very concerned about that. When we started out —

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** It's not true, Jim.

**Mr Bradley:** Well, I read that in a press release. The member says it's not true. My understanding — and he will correct me some day in this House no doubt if he feels it's different — is that we have a situation where 600 inspectors, I read in a press release, are going to be released from employment and this is going to be turned over to the private sector.

I'm wondering if there's going to be anybody left to be in the building in St Catharines when the minister comes down to cut the ribbon. Will there be anybody left or will it be an empty building? It's had shovels put in and shovels put out and everybody's done something with that building. When I had the pleasure of joining in the announcement, along with Premier Peterson, that 1,400 jobs and a new building would be coming to downtown St Catharines, people were delighted. Now we'll be lucky to have 500 jobs around there and we'll have an empty building. You'll be getting people out of other buildings owned by the private sector into this government building. I know my friend from Grey-Owen Sound — I'll invite him to see this — will be appalled by that.

We have schools. There's apparently going to be some legislation coming in to deal with the field of education. Again already the government has backed off on a deadline of some consultation, and I think that's wise. I think the capitulation to those who have asked that the government back off in this regard is wise. What we're



seeing in education are larger classes, special services to special needs students being lost, junior kindergarten, which is very helpful in students getting a head start, being eliminated in many areas, adult education delivered by the high schools being eliminated in many circumstances, and the Minister of Education and Training gets up and says this is not a detrimental effect on education; it's not in the classroom. Indeed it is, and he should know that.

I just read the Liquor Control Board of Ontario's annual report. It says, "Best year ever." You've got Andy Brandt as the chair, good person that he is, a former Conservative leader, business person. Why on earth you would want to be closing or at least turning this over to the private sector, I'll never know. First of all, it's a cash cow for the government. But more important, the way we market our alcoholic beverages in this province is the envy of many places. It's not the old days where the hours were severely restricted, where the conditions were awful for people to have to go in. They are now modern stores. They are convenient stores for people. They have good staff in there working hard in the LCBOs. Students or young people have a very hard time getting these beverages if they're under age.

1730

The last Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations said this wasn't the case, gave some bizarre idea that in the private sector it was better policed. Well, just go to Niagara Falls, New York, and see how much better it's policed. It isn't, and that's not what you want. We've got a good system. The reason I'm even more supportive of it than most people is it's been good for the marketing of Ontario wine, using Ontario grapes grown in this province and wine produced in this province. It's been a good vehicle for us to be able to market that product and finally gain it the kind of recognition it has deserved because of the high quality of wine and grape juice which is produced in Ontario.

So please do not make a mistake just based on ideology. I know there's an ideological thread that goes through particularly many of the new members there, who believe that somehow if it's the public sector or semi-public sector it can't be any good and that everything must be privatized. This is one example where you should make a good, commonsense decision and retain the Liquor Control Board of Ontario for the people of this province. The testing of the product is well done. The stores are clean and well run. It's good product they produce. They've really improved, and I want to give Andy Brandt the credit where it's due. He has worked hard to make those kinds of improvements. So I hope you will make sure those improvements are left in place.

So when we debate this resolution, and I have only a couple of minutes left to deal with it, I say that we in the opposition are prepared to deal with government legislation. We hope that when it goes to committee and there are public hearings — and we think it's wise to have public hearings on such things as the act affecting fire safety and firefighters in this province. We fought for and got those changes; in other words, those hearings across the province. When we have changes to rent control which in effect mean the end of rent control in this

province — and the applause will come again from the large developers and the very large landlords who are affected by this — when we eliminate rent control in this province to please your ideology and to please the richest people of the province, then I know who you are catering to. But you must expect there's going to be a full and frank debate of that piece of legislation, as there should be in all legislation.

I hope the government learned its lesson with Bill 26, the huge bully bill, the omnibus bill which took the power from the elected members and gave it to the cabinet, and in particular to the people in the Premier's office, the senior advisers who are not elected, people nobody can get at. I hope the government has learned its lesson. I look forward to debating fully and comprehensively each piece of legislation that comes before us until midnight every night before Christmas.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I appreciate the opportunity to take just a couple of minutes and comment on this motion. What's interesting of course is to listen to the government backbenchers, particularly the new members, spout off about how they're the only ones who care about democracy and they're the only ones who are prepared to come here and work and that's why they're the only ones who are going to support this motion to sit for the next two weeks until midnight, which of course is wrong on all accounts. The fact of the matter is that we will be supporting that particular motion. The reality is that in and of itself, it's not a big deal. It's fairly routine that every year the last two weeks of the sitting we extend to sit until midnight to allow the government an opportunity to deal with as much of their legislation as is reasonably possible.

But of course, as is the wont of this government, they had wanted and expected that we would just let this motion go whizzing by, let it be rammed through, it's not important. They don't want to have the kinds of debate that this two hours — and the rules allow a two-hour debate on this kind of a motion — they don't want to have the kinds of debates and criticisms that come up in the two hours that are allowed, and who can blame them.

Any government that has to sit there and listen to critics is not happy about it but, given this government's agenda and the way that you've gone after people on every single front, we can see why it would be absolute anathema to you that you would have to sit here and have all of what you've done to the people of Ontario thrown back at you. We know you don't like to give people their say. My colleague from St Catharines talked on a few of the things, and I want to go back over some of the issues where the history is there to be seen. You either didn't want, refused or had to be brought kicking and screaming into the public arena to allow people to have their say.

We remember Bill 7, the anti-worker Bill 7, one of the most draconian pieces of legislation ever brought in. In that piece of legislation you made scabs legal again in the province of Ontario and that brought violence to picket lines that didn't exist after we passed Bill 40 and said that scabs are no longer welcome in Ontario and they're no longer legal in Ontario. You changed that.

You also took away the rights of public sector workers to maintain the collective agreement that they negotiated



in a democratic, fair way when you privatized the work out from under them. Why did you do that? Quite simply because when you sell and privatize all the public services to your Tory friends, you don't want to hand them collective agreements that require half-decent wages to be paid and half-decent benefits and a decent grievance procedure and all the other protections and rights that one has in a collective agreement. No, no. You wanted to free your corporate entrepreneurial friends who were going to buy up these public services; you wanted to free them from the bonds of an ungodly collective agreement.

You made it unlawful to carry that collective agreement and the rights and privileges that workers had from one employer to the next as they do in the private sector. It still remains in the private sector, but you took it away from public sector workers as part of your privatization plan. You rammed that bill through without one day of public hearings — not one hour, not one minute. You rammed it through, and it wasn't just an amendment to the Ontario Labour Relations Act. Oh, no. Just like your new Bill 99, the WCB legislation, it's not a mere amendment. You are replacing, and you did under Bill 7 replace, the Ontario Labour Relations Act in its entirety, with not one minute of public hearings. And you want to stand here today and talk about democracy? What hypocrisy. What hypocrisy to talk about democracy when you take something that important to the millions of working people in this province and you don't allow one minute of public hearings.

What happens after you've taken away those rights? That's not good enough, because once you've dealt with those who have a collective agreement, now you've got to turn your guns and go after those who don't have collective agreements. So then we had not that long ago Bill 49, the Employment Standards Act changes. This was the bill introduced last May that was just a very simple, minor housekeeping bill with nothing that anybody should get too excited about, so, "No, there won't be any public hearings."

Your plan was to make that law within a few weeks, and it took us days and days and days of pressure inside this Legislature, in the labour movement, outside in communities, working on the backbenchers, working on the ministers, telling them that this is unacceptable, before we finally dragged you into province-wide public hearings. Lo and behold, what happened when we got them out there on Bill 49, their takeaway of employment standards rights? They got creamed in every community. Over 90% of the presentations were against your legislation. That was a piece of —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** What I'm hearing from the member over to my left here, who still hasn't learned that he should be a little more careful with his quips, he says that's not true. I defy him to debate with me any time, anywhere as to what the total percentage of presenters were in favour and opposed.

1740

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** It's a setup.

**Mr Christopherson:** You got creamed on that. He says it's a setup. Why did you agree to take it out in the first place? Because you knew you couldn't defend it, that's why.

That's what you tried to do in Bill 49 and we dragged you out across the province and you got beat up something awful, and why? For the simple reason that you were taking away rights and you said you weren't and we were able to prove, yes, you were. You did take away rights. Once you dealt with people who had collective agreements, then you went after those who didn't have collective agreements.

Then what did you do? When we look back in the history books, we see what happened with Bill 26, to make the case that you're the most non-democratic government we've ever had. My colleague from the Liberal Party has already talked about how much power you took from the floor of this Legislature and individual elected members, all the things you mouth about being important.

The reality is, you backbenchers supported ramming Bill 26 through. Most of you probably still don't know what the hell is in there, but the fact of the matter is that you tried to ram it through in the dying days of the session going into Christmas. What did it take for us to force you to be democrats, to actually accept that there's a democratic tradition in this province? What did it finally take?

Not mere debate, not mere pressure, not mere placards, it took a member of this Legislature, Alvin Curling, to actually sit here and allow us to take over this Legislature, and you caved in because you couldn't defend ramming it through. That's why we ended up with at least a couple of weeks in January.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Christopherson:** You can moan and groan, but there's the history and there are the facts and that's the way it went down. You didn't have the ability to withstand that pressure because you didn't have ground to stand on. It was a massive undemocratic move that you finally got held accountable for and you had to back down, just like you did on Bill 49 and just like you had to on WCB, because when we talk about WCB — I've only got a minute left and I want to make two points.

WCB: Your leaked cabinet document that I made public a couple of weeks ago said that you were going to make that law by the end of December and you know full well that committees by rules of this House cannot travel the province while the House is sitting. So clearly you had no intention of holding province-wide public hearings. You were going to ram through yet another bill. But there was enough pressure and outrage out there that the minister was finally forced just the other day to admit that she had no choice but to give province-wide public hearings. That's what you did there.

The last bill I want to mention is Bill 84. You want to talk about democracy and public input and consultation? Go talk to the firefighters because they remember, as I do, the video of then leader of the third party Mike Harris making a promise to their convention, a promise — I've seen the video — where he said, "We will consult with firefighters before we make any changes."

You introduced Bill 84, no consultation with firefighters, and there were over 2,000 of them out on the front lawn to express their gratitude for your giving to democracy. That's how they felt about it, firefighters,



very peaceable people. You've taken on virtually everyone. You have no right morally to stand up here and talk about democracy. You know nothing about it. The only democracy is what we force you into.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Mr Johnson, the government House leader, has moved government notice of motion number 11. Shall the motion carry? Carried.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY AND SUPPORT  
ARREARS ENFORCEMENT ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

SUR LES OBLIGATIONS FAMILIALES ET  
L'EXÉCUTION DES ARRIÉRÉS D'ALIMENTS

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 82, An Act to establish the Family Responsibility Office, protect the interests of children and spouses through the strict enforcement of support orders while offering flexibility to responsible payors and make consequential amendments to certain statutes / *Projet de loi 82, Loi créant le Bureau des obligations familiales, visant à protéger les intérêts des enfants et des conjoints grâce à l'exécution rigoureuse des ordonnances alimentaires tout en offrant une certaine souplesse aux payeurs responsables, et apportant des modifications corrélatives à des lois.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for St Catharines.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. You caught me in the middle of an ice cube.

We are now on Bill 82 and this is a bill which deals with family support. In case some of the members were absent yesterday, I might just go over some of the points I made yesterday about this bill and why we're there. What the government has done is created chaos in the family support plan. It is always difficult to administer. I'm a fairminded person, I say. I know it's difficult for any government to administer a plan where there are changes constantly taking place in individual circumstances. No question about that; that is difficult.

However, I thought the regional offices in places such as Hamilton and other areas in the province were at least helpful in dealing with the problems that people brought to our attention. The government, in its obsession with making huge cuts to finance its risky tax scheme for which it is going to have to borrow billions of dollars to give a tax break, has instead decided that it will centralize. That's the mode of this government: centralization. The next thing you'll know they'll want regionalization throughout the province; they'll want regional governments everywhere and they'll want to eliminate local governments, the only government you can really get at and relate to. The same principle was applied in this area. You eliminated the regional offices, where people could visit and see somebody perhaps on a personal basis to discuss a problem, to bring the necessary documentation to try to resolve the problem, and you centralized them.

As the lawyers say, be that as it may, I don't agree with it, but if that's the route you are going to take, it's important that what you're going to replace the regional offices with is going to be in place before you close the

regional offices down. That's why we have chaos. I hope it will be resolved. Many components of this bill are entirely supportable. You'll find the opposition parties in favour of them. There are a few contentious issues in the bill but many of them are very supportable. It's important to canvass these issues carefully. It's important to have the public hearings, because there are both men and women who have complaints about the system and have suggestions on how it can be improved.

By creating chaos in the system you have managed to unite many formerly warring spouses because the complaints are not simply coming from one side now; the majority of complaints I'm getting are coming from the recipient of the funds, the person with the children, most often a woman in this case who know that the other spouse, the husband in most cases, is providing the money, is having the money deducted at work, what I guess you'd call a garnishee. But somewhere in between the money isn't getting from one to another, and as a result the one spouse and in particular the children are suffering. This is because you're moving too quickly, too drastically and not looking at the consequences.

As I say, even if I disagree with you, at least have your plan ready to go into effect before you make the change. That's going to be important in all the legislation with which you deal. Be ready. Have it in effect. Have consulted, get the bugs out of it and then you can implement your plan. This bill will pass. It may even pass with the support of the opposition parties. We'll see by the time the final changes are made to the legislation. But the system itself is broken.

The Attorney General of this province has stood in the House and tried to defend this system. We in the opposition believe the Attorney General would have been better to say, "We moved too quickly, we didn't look at the consequences and we're not ready for the changes," and then try to fix it. As the member for Nickel Belt said the other day, there would be a lot more credibility if that were the case. Instead we simply get a recital of statistics.

I hope this problem is being resolved. I don't take pleasure in having to stand in the House and bring all these problems to the attention of the Attorney General. I wish they were resolved because people are suffering as a result. People are very vulnerable. People are very desperate. That's why I believe it would be important for all of us to see this problem solved.

1750

The Attorney General has decided, because he had his marching orders — I'm sure it wasn't because he wanted to — from the brain trust in the government, that he had to cut again, much more extensively than he ever contemplated. As the Dominion Bond Rating Service said, the tax cut is causing this government to take actions it had no intention of taking, because you have to borrow money to give the tax cut. I think it fits very well with this bill. I'm going to read an important sentence from the Dominion Bond Rating Service report that is out today because it fits this bill and because some members may not have been in the House when I said this before.

"The tax rate cut is the single largest challenge to the government's balanced budget objective. The 1996 budget estimates annual forgone revenue from full



implementation of the provincial income tax rate cut at \$4.8 billion. Dominion Bond Rating Service" — and this is a key line — "estimates that the equivalent of 88% of the increase in tax revenue resulting from economic growth over the next three years will be required to finance the tax reduction." Then it goes on to say, in other words, you're going to have to cut even further.

That's why we're going to have decisions made that are unwise. One example is the decision to close the regional offices of the family support plan before there was an alternative plan in place; I think an alternative plan which isn't as good, but nevertheless it wasn't even in place. It's all being dictated by this bizarre tax scheme that you people are pushing forward with, although as some would say — I had a person call my office the other day who said: "Well, why are you saying they're implementing the tax cut? I haven't seen any of this money yet; for all the talk of it, I haven't seen the money."

Indeed they're right: The government has postponed the implementation of the tax cut. That's annoyed many of the true believers and followers. It hasn't annoyed me because I understand why, but it is contrary to what the government promised. We're seeing a broken promise there. But that, I'm saying, is understandable. I think you should follow the procedure which says that when you've balanced the budget, that's the time you look at across-the-board tax cuts. You don't look at across-the-board tax cuts while you have to borrow money to be able to give me and others in this province a tax cut, the richest of course getting the most.

The Speaker holds the bill up for me to see because he wishes to have me relate this to the bill, something I don't recall the member for Etobicoke West doing in days gone by or worrying excessively about but sitting in the chair today must do so.

I think you made a drastic error. I hope some of the provisions of this legislation will be helpful, though I think you should think of the consequences of some of them. While the penalties for those who are genuinely breaking the rules are good penalties, you have to make sure that people aren't being hurt by this in another way. In other words, that's why you have to have the hearings, so both sides in the dispute can bring forward their comments, because there is virtually always a second side, and sometimes many sides, to an issue.

I know many other members of this House will wish to discuss this bill further and I look forward to the very positive comments that will be forthcoming from others. The New Democratic Party will be next on my remarks, and I thank the members for their indulgence this afternoon.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I've listened to the debate over Bill 82 — it has been very brief to date — and I've also heard the parliamentary assistant jump to his feet and protest to the effect that somehow it's his insistence that people who have been speaking to Bill 82 have not spent enough time applauding what he would tell us are the good things in it.

There has been debate about that and, quite frankly, on Thursday of this week I'll be following Marilyn Churley,

the member for Riverdale, who will be speaking to this on Thursday, November 28. She'll be speaking to it around a quarter to 4 in the afternoon, and I'll be speaking to it later in the day. Undoubtedly, we will have more members speaking to it come Monday. But if you think that Ms Churley or myself or any other member of this caucus or, quite frankly, the opposition is going to overlook the fact that this government has dismantled the family support plan — they have shut it down. It's moot to talk about new enforcement measures when they haven't been able to deliver on the plan as it exists now.

The problem is we know why. We listened to the Attorney General for week after week after week as he somehow tried to trivialize the cases that were being brought forward to him and suggest that, "Oh, they were the exceptions and not the rule." We found out what the case really was, that the family support plan is in storage. It's in cold storage in a warehouse in Downsview. It's packaged in cardboard moving boxes — boxes and boxes and boxes of files, boxes and boxes of mail. This government has put the family support plan out of business, out of commission. They've got a lot of nerve suggesting that these amendments are going to change the reality of their gross mismanagement.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I think this is the fourth day that we've been debating this particular bill. All members of the House acknowledge that there are problems, although not all members of the House acknowledge that there have been — I think, outstanding now the system is receiving 8,000 letters a day. It's receiving 50,000 telephone calls a day. It has about 150 files that are outstanding that people are working on. We know —

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** One hundred and fifty?

**Mr Tilson:** That's right.

**Mr Crozier:** I've got 150 in my office.

**Mr Tilson:** Well, okay. Then it's even higher, and that's all the more reason why we're changing this particular system. The decentralized system hasn't worked. The whole system of assisting people hasn't worked. The whole idea of the number of payors who simply are avoiding payments is unbelievable, and we're listing all the various examples. We're increasing the ways in which people —

**Mr Kormos:** You put in storage, you shut it down, it's in chaos.

**Mr Tilson:** The member for Welland-Thorold is going on, Mr Speaker, and it's that very tactic of delay that's causing problems in this province. I'm simply suggesting that this bill, if we got on with it, if we passed it, if you allowed us to pass it instead of stalling, particularly the way the members of the third party continue to stall on this thing, we would be able to solve many of these problems. I would strongly recommend that all members of this House try and work together with the government to solve this problem instead of simply your petty criticisms. I urge the House to vote on this bill so that we can help the women and children of this province.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Interjection:** Let's vote on it right now.

**Mr Tilson:** Exactly. Someone said, "Let's vote on it right now," and I think that's a good idea. The problem can be solved if only you stopped your delaying tactics and allowed us to deal with it now.

The system clearly isn't working. You're a lawyer, member for Welland-Thorold. You know perfectly well what you do to advise clients. You tell clients, "Don't use this system." Why? Because the system isn't working. We want to make it work and we want to do it now.

**Mr Crozier:** I want to make a couple of comments in the two minutes I have. The member for Dufferin-Peel just now used the words "stalling" and "delaying." I can remember watching this Legislature a few years ago when the now Premier Mike Harris stood over there as leader of the third party and read off every lake, stream and river in the province of Ontario, which had absolutely nothing to do with the issue at hand but was nothing but a filibustering, stalling tactic. Certainly if there is any stalling — and I happen to think this is our democratic right, as it was his — we certainly learned from an expert.

1800

When the member for Dufferin-Peel also said that there are 150 outstanding cases, I wouldn't be surprised if there are 150,000 outstanding cases, because I have 150 in my office. I have two cases that I could refer to specifically. One is where the ex-husband and wife both agree that the payments he makes to the family support plan are being deducted from his salary. His employer has confirmed that, and yet the payments to the previous wife are stuck someplace in limbo. We also have example upon example of the hardship that this is bringing to families. It's just the case where no plan was in place before the regional offices were closed. I agree, if the minister would simply stand up and take responsibility for it, why, it may be that he would be better understood.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I would like to commend the member for St Catharines on the speeches that he made both this afternoon and yesterday and I know he would want me to reinforce a couple of issues.

First of all, if the government was so concerned about getting this bill forward, then why did the government introduce this bill on October 1 and not call it for debate until November 20? This is a government that is so concerned about women and children who aren't receiving support, that is so concerned about payors who are trying to make payments into the system and that money isn't going to their families, but this government that's so concerned waited all those weeks before it even decided to call the bill. I remind the members who are here, on November 7 this party asked for unanimous consent for the Attorney General to begin debate on this bill and the government members turned that down. So for all your whining and bellyaching now about getting to this bill, let me tell you, you don't have very good ground to stand on when you're talking about how concerned you are about this bill.

Let me reinforce again that the tax cut and the Attorney General's desire to make his contribution to it are at the root of the crisis now. I've heard the member for Dufferin-Peel on more than one occasion say the system clearly isn't working. The system is in crisis right now, not because of previous governments but because of this Attorney General's conscious, blatant, partisan political decision that it was more important to finance the tax cut on the backs of these women and children than it was to ensure that people who used to get regular support payments would continue to do so.

That's the root of the crisis right now. Don't come in here and try and tell everyone and the public that the system isn't working. The system broke down in mid-August when your Attorney General decided to cut 290 staff and close the regional offices. That's how much he cares about women and children who need support payments.

**The Speaker:** Member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** I hate to eat into the 6 o'clock news for many people who may be watching that, but I found the comments that were made very helpful. The parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General defended the government line, as he should. I think he's a person who I would recommend to the Premier would replace some of his colleagues in cabinet. I know it'll make him very happy to hear that. The two NDP members were most helpful and my Liberal colleague from Essex South; all very helpful in bringing forward the issues related to this bill, and I think there has been a good debate on this issue.

As I mentioned in a previous debate this afternoon, I share the view of the member for Sudbury East that if the government were so concerned about this bill, they should have brought it forward much earlier, should have debated it much earlier. Instead the government selected other bills to have debated in this House.

When there is a priority, the government demonstrates that priority, first of all, by introducing the bill early in the session and, second, by calling the bill for debate at an early point in the session. When it doesn't do so, there's a reason. I suspect — and I don't want to be accused of being a suspicious or cynical person, because I'm not — because of all the problems that were being experienced in the family support plan offices, that in fact that's why the government decided it would not bring this bill forward at an earlier point in time.

I think the government has at least heard from those of us in the opposition, and privately in the caucus meeting of the Conservatives, about all the problems that exist in the family support office. I hope the government has learned a lesson in dealing with this situation and I hope these matters can be resolved so that women and children in this province are not going to suffer further.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. It now being marginally after 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1806.*



# CONTENTS

Tuesday 26 November 1996

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Uliana Badiali</b>	
Mr Sergio	5335
<b>Education financing</b>	
Mr Silipo	5335
Mr Patten	5335
Mr Len Wood	5336
<b>Napanee Business Improvement Association</b>	
Mr Fox	5335
<b>Anita Larkin</b>	
Mr Flaherty	5336
<b>Highway inspectors</b>	
Mr Bradley	5336
<b>Office of the worker adviser</b>	
Mr Bradley	5336
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Mr Wildman	5337
<b>Osteoporosis</b>	
Mrs Johns	5337

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Senior Achievement Awards</b>	
Mr Jackson	5337
Mr Sergio	5339
Mr Christopherson	5339
<b>Workers' compensation</b>	
Mrs Witmer	5338
Mr Duncan	5338
Mr Christopherson	5339

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Workers' compensation</b>	
Mr Duncan	5340
Mrs Witmer	5340, 5342
Mr Hampton	5342
<b>Health care funding</b>	
Mr Duncan	5341
Mr Wilson	5341
<b>Health care reform</b>	
Mr Hampton	5342
Mr Wilson	5343
<b>Hospital financing</b>	
Mrs Caplan	5343
Mr Wilson	5344
<b>Ipperwash Provincial Park</b>	
Mr Wildman	5344
Mr Runciman	5344
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Mrs Ross	5345
Mr Harnick	5345
<b>Tax reduction</b>	
Mr Phillips	5345
Mr David Johnson	5345
<b>Education reform</b>	
Mr Wildman	5346
Mr Snobelen	5346

## Workfare

Mr Froese	5346
Mrs Ecker	5346
<b>Transit services for the disabled</b>	
Mr Morin	5347
Mr Palladini	5347
<b>Ontario Lottery Corp</b>	
Mr Martin	5347
Mr Saunderson	5347
<b>Municipal restructuring</b>	
Mr Newman	5348
Mr Leach	5348

## PETITIONS

<b>Prescription drugs</b>	
Mr Ruprecht	5348
<b>Workers' compensation</b>	
Ms Martel	5348
<b>School accommodation</b>	
Mr Baird	5349
Mrs Caplan	5351
<b>North York Branson Hospital</b>	
Mr Kwinter	5349
<b>Health care funding</b>	
Ms Churley	5349
<b>Snowmobile registration</b>	
Mr O'Toole	5349
<b>Schizophrenia</b>	
Mr Patten	5350
<b>Tax reduction</b>	
Mr Marchese	5350
<b>Parole system</b>	
Mr Tilson	5350
Mr Ouellette	5350
<b>School bus safety</b>	
Mr Hoy	5350
<b>Occupational health and safety</b>	
Mr Christopherson	5350
<b>School boards</b>	
Mr Laughren	5351

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Workers' Compensation Reform Act, 1996, Bill 99, Mrs Witmer</b>	
Agreed to	5352
<b>Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving), 1996, Bill 100, Mr Jim Brown,</b>	
Mr Jim Brown	5352
Agreed to	5352
<b>Franchises' Arbitration Act, 1996, Bill 101, Mr Chiarelli,</b>	
Mr Crozier	5352
Agreed to	5352

## GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

<b>Extended hours of meeting, government notice of motion number 11, Mr David Johnson</b>	
Mr David Johnson	5352
Mr Wildman	5355
Mr Baird	5356
Mr Marchese	5358
Mr Wettlaufer	5359
Mr Bisson	5360
Mr Gilchrist	5361
Mr Bradley	5362
Mr Christopherson	5367
Agreed to	5369

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996 Bill 82, Mr Harnick</b>	
Mr Bradley	5369, 5371
Mr Kormos	5370
Mr Tilson	5370
Ms Martel	5371
Debate adjourned	5371

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Parliamentary language</b>	
Mr Hampton	5340
The Speaker	5340
Ms Lankin	5340
<b>Visitor</b>	
The Speaker	5342, 5345

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 26 novembre 1996

### PREMIÈRE LECTURE

<b>Loi de 1996 portant réforme de la Loi sur les accidents du travail, projet de loi 99, M<sup>me</sup> Witmer</b>	
Adoptée	5352
<b>Loi de 1996 modifiant le Code de la route (conduite avec facultés affaiblies), projet de loi 100, M. Brown</b>	
Adoptée	5352
<b>Loi de 1996 sur les arbitrages visant des franchises, projet de loi 101, M. Chiarelli</b>	
Adoptée	5352

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 1996 sur les obligations familiales et l'exécution des arriérés d'aliments, Projet de loi 82, M. Harnick</b>	
Débat ajournée	5371

CA 22N  
X1  
-223

Government  
Publications



No. 129

N° 129

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 27 November 1996

Mercredi 27 novembre 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 27 November 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 27 novembre 1996

*The House met at 1332.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### HOSPITAL FINANCING

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I rise today out of concern for health services in my riding. I met with representatives from our two hospitals in Cornwall as well as the District Health Council of Eastern Ontario last Friday. Despite an extreme financial crunch, bed closures and employee layoffs due to reduced funding levels, these individuals explained they're doing the best they can to meet your financial targets. Specifically the District Health Council of Eastern Ontario will soon submit its recommendations for restructuring our two hospitals. They will do this by March, only four months away. They expect that the restructuring commission will respond in a few months, likely by summer.

In order that this process be completed fairly and orderly they ask the Minister of Health to defer for a short time his intended funding reductions to them. If the minister does not commit to this, local health officials fear they will have to slash patient services haphazardly.

I join these individuals and ask the minister to defer his funding recommendations to the Cornwall General Hospital and the Hotel Dieu Hospital so they can do their job in the best possible way.

### LABOUR DISPUTES

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Yesterday the Mike Harris government introduced Bill 99, their legislated attack on injured workers through changes to the WCB. We've advised them there's going to be a major battle across this province on that legislation. I want to bring the House up to date on some of the results of their earlier labour legislation lest people forget, given the fact that this government never allowed any public hearings on their anti-worker Bill 7.

Right now we have in this province the following strikes, and this is not a total list of all the strikes that are caused as a result of your making scabs legal: UFCW Local 175 against IGA in Bancroft; USWA 6917, S.A. Armstrong in Scarborough; CAW Local 252, Bramalea Rebuilders; CUPE Local 2862, Ottawa Valley Autistic Homes; CUPE 3826, Ottawa-Carleton Life Skills Authority; CUPE 2191, Metropolitan Toronto Association for Community Living; USWA 950, Goldcorp, Red Lake; IATSE 173, Cineplex Odeon all across the province; USWA Local 5297, Branson Mercantile in the Ottawa region.

This is just a sampling of the strikes that exist in this province because the government made scabs legal again in the province of Ontario. There has been violence on these picket lines. There were no incidents of violence when Bill 40 was in place. This government takes the responsibility for every injured worker on those picket lines.

### GREY CUP

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** This past weekend Canadians across the country were treated to a great Canadian tradition: the Grey Cup game. All the people in the stands and those at home viewing the game on their television sets saw what I believe was one of the best football games in Grey Cup history.

An event such as this doesn't just happen. It takes a great deal of work and many volunteers. This Grey Cup was no exception. There were many people behind the scenes working hard for their community during the year-long preparation leading up to the Grey Cup game.

Mr Ron Foxcroft and Mrs Marnie Paikin were the two people who co-chaired the Grey Cup committee. Both of these people, well known for their community involvement, eagerly agreed to take on the responsibility as co-chairs for the Grey Cup in Hamilton. But Ron and Marnie were assisted by numerous volunteers, headed up by another great volunteer himself, Mr Bob Hodgson. Bob took on the task of organizing all the 1,400 volunteers with such tremendous enthusiasm and undying effort that we saw volunteers involved in every aspect of the festivities.

In fact, virtually everything that went on during the four-day event, from manning the beer tents to musical entertainment to the wonderful Grey Cup parade and indeed the Grey Cup game, happened because of the many individuals in Hamilton-Wentworth who cared enough to volunteer their time.

Volunteerism is, as I've said before, alive and well in Hamilton-Wentworth.

### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I want to bring to the attention of the House the activity of people across the province today who felt it was essential to send a message to both the Minister of Education and the Premier. I refer to the people who know about your education cuts — present and future — and who know how education is and will be compromised as a result.

We're talking about people who for the most part have not been politically active before, ordinary folks whose concern for a decent education for their children has caused them to rise up and be vocal about their concerns.



Mothers for Education, People for Education and the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Education are just such groups, and today they took to the streets outside their MPPs' offices to ask that members such as myself take their message to Minister Snobelen and Premier Harris. The message is simple. They're saying, "We don't like your education cuts and we want you to stop them."

I'm speaking about people like Bev Rizzi of Mothers for Education from Thunder Bay, who today with other worried parents delivered report cards on the Harris government's record on education: failing grades in all areas.

Connie Hartviksen is the chair of the Port Arthur Collegiate parent council. In a recent letter to the minister she wrote:

"Although it is true that your government was elected on a mandate to eliminate the provincial deficit, you also promised that the cuts would not hurt the classroom.

"Already there are many signs in my students' school that the cuts are affecting the classroom — more user fees, larger classes, fewer options....

"Our children are our future. Don't sacrifice them for your government's agenda."

Amen.

#### WORKFARE

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I want to commend today to members of the Legislature a piece of literature that is on circulation in the legislative library. I know that members of the government have been encouraged not to be confused by the facts around workfare, but this particular volume is of importance to all of us.

It is the result of a round table that was held on May 17, 1996, at the University of Toronto faculty of law Centre for the Study of State and Market. Its author is Robert Howse, who's with the faculty of law at the University of Toronto.

This is a preliminary draft which has been made available to us for our information because of the importance of this topic, and it is not for citation publicly. I would tell people in summary that the conclusions are that mandatory workfare may cost a great deal in administrative and legal costs but have very, very few positive results; that it's unlikely to be successful in high unemployment areas such as Ontario; that child care and skills upgrading are far more important in terms of getting people into the workforce than mandatory workfare; that it should not be supposed that this is a budgetary saving and the proof in this book is what has happened in other jurisdictions.

I urge my colleagues to take this volume out and read it in your discussions around mandatory workfare.

1340

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHUMBERLAND

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I'm pleased to be able to report today a milestone in the economic life of a major town in my riding of Northumberland. I was recently informed that Cobourg's level of employment

has now recovered to pre-recession levels. In fact, in the first six months of this year Cobourg experienced a 5.4% increase in manufacturing employment.

While we have benefitted from strong performance in the automobile manufacturing sector, I suspect we're also benefitting from a resurgence of private sector growth and consumer confidence in this province. Economic indicators point to another year of strong growth in our exports and automobile sectors in 1997.

Since I'm not one to let an opportunity to promote my home riding slip by, I would like to point out today that Northumberland is open for some of that new business. We're on Highway 401 just an hour east of Toronto. We have a diverse economy that includes agriculture, tourism, service industries and automobile manufacturing companies. We have a well-educated, stable workforce.

I would encourage any new or existing business seeking lower costs, serviced industrial parks and a high quality of life for its employees to consider Northumberland. If you'll pardon the expression, Mr Speaker, we're yours to discover.

#### SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** On Thursday of this week I have the privilege of presenting my private member's Bill 78 for second reading. Today I am presenting the Minister of Transportation with 30,000 petitions from across the province urging the minister to strengthen the law and pass Bill 78 to protect our children.

These 30,000 people feel the pain of families and friends of children who have been killed by people illegally passing a school bus. These 30,000 people can understand the terror of a school bus driver watching helplessly as tragedy unfolds. These 30,000 people can feel the apprehension of a parent who wonders if their child will return from school safely. These 30,000 people can feel the anguish of a child whose life was forever changed by someone who felt their time was more valuable than a child's safety.

These 30,000 people feel that the endangerment of children cannot be tolerated and must be met with stiffer penalties, and these people are tired of seeing those who are charged walk away free because of a technicality. They feel that bus drivers must be given the power to protect children. These petitioners are sending a strong message to all members of this House to protect our children and pass Bill 78 into law. Perhaps I could have a page deliver these to the Minister of Transportation.

#### HIGHWAY INSPECTORS

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** We learned yesterday, and actually we heard through leaks previously, that the government announced 700 positions at the Ministry of Transportation were going by the wayside. That's 700 families across the province of Ontario whose major bread earner will not have a job. It quite frankly will probably put those families in a very desperate situation.

In the riding of Cochrane South we learned yesterday by way of the media that 37 people within the riding of Cochrane South have lost their jobs. Basically, they were

called to a meeting, they were told their services were no longer required and they were sent out without any opportunity of being able to bid on other jobs within the ministries.

But what's even more shocking is that the government is privatizing the people who are out there who are supervising the work that is done by contractors on the highways across Ontario. In other words, what's happening here is the government is putting the fox in charge of the hen house. The people who are out there doing the work in regard to supervising the work that is being done by contractors are going to be supervised by other private sector contractors.

That is wrong because in the end what the government is doing is giving contractors a blank cheque, because they will be able to arrange relationships within the private sector where the private sector contractor who is supervising the contractor in the private sector will say, "Listen, let's just pretend that certain things haven't happened," and be able to flow money one way or another. I say in the end that is bad for the people of Ontario and it is going to be bad for the drivers of this province.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** We've had three full days of debate with respect to Bill 82, a bill to improve the family support plan, and we spent some time on it yesterday. This will be the fifth day, with the NDP opposition motion with respect to the debate on Bill 82.

Today two groups held a press conference at Queen's Park. Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears is a group of women who formed an organization to fight against their children's fathers who are not paying arrears for the child support of these children. Today, along with Families Against Deadbeats, they asked, in fact pleaded with, the members of all political parties in the Legislature to put aside partisan politics and to pass the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act as quickly as possible.

These people know what they have had to go through to receive just a pittance of the money owed to them. Their children have suffered and they have cried for these children. These people want to know why this bill is not being passed unanimously and why the NDP today is placing a motion before this Legislature to ask the government to withdraw Bill 82.

I commend these groups, along with a young lady by the name of Samantha Diorio, who is 13 years of age and who spoke on behalf of the children of this province who are doing without because of a parent who is not adhering to a judicial decision which requires them to help pay for the upkeep and future of these children.

On behalf of the government, I commend these people for standing up for these rights and urge the government —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

#### CLARKE T. ROLLINS

**Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent

to recognize the passing of a previous member of this House, Clarke T. Rollins.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Do we have unanimous consent for the member for Quinte? Agreed.

**Mr Rollins:** Few members in this House have known the immense benefit of having a close family relative as a former MPP. I am one of those who had that privilege.

True, my cousin Clarke T. Rollins did not represent the constituents whom I have the honour of serving today, but his reputation has brought honour to the family name beyond the boundaries of the former riding of East Hastings.

From 1959 to 1981, Clarke T. Rollins was a member of this provincial Parliament. He may have been a man of few words, but not of few actions. His unceasing dedication to his people and his constituents in his riding and to his province set an example that we all should strive for.

To his wife, Beverley, and his sons Bob, Thomas and Andrew I convey my deepest condolences.

**Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough):** I too would like to speak of the passing of Mr Clarke T. Rollins, a retired Progressive Conservative member in this Legislature for the riding of Hastings-Peterborough, who died at home in Bancroft on Monday, November 25.

Mr Rollins was born in Coe Hill, Ontario, in 1911. He was a distributor of petroleum products, a business which he continued to operate while serving as a member of this Legislature. He served also as the reeve of the township of Wollaston for eight years and warden of Hastings county in 1950. Mr Rollins was first elected to the Legislature in 1959 and was re-elected five times prior to his retirement in 1980. He was also appointed as chairman of the St Lawrence Parks Commission in 1971.

Clarke was a dedicated member who believed in serving his constituents, a self-described country member who spent a great deal of time on road improvement, securing grants and loans for the riding and in building community centres to improve the lifestyle of his constituents. He kept in touch with his constituents by fostering a close relationship with the township and county councils of Peterborough and Hastings counties.

He once stated: "If people have problems, I am here to help them. I'm most anxious to see that everyone works." Former Premier Bill Davis said in 1971, "Clarke Rollins has done a great job of representing this riding and has been of invaluable assistance to me."

I would like to add that Clarke, as a friend and a mentor, has also been of invaluable assistance to me over the years. Clarke was always close to the people he represented and willing to address their interests at Queen's Park. He was truly a man of the people. I know that every member of this Legislature joins me in expressing our condolences to Clarke's wife, Beverley, and their sons.

1350

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On behalf of the Liberal Party, I would like to express our condolences to the wife and family of Clarke Rollins, who served his constituents with distinction during his time in the Legislature, and it was a lengthy time in the Legislature.

Clarke was one of those individuals who was known as a true constituency man. He was an individual who



probably knew two thirds of the people in his riding very well himself. While some of us may think what we do in this Legislature is of consequence, and indeed it is, and we believe that this portion of our job is exceedingly important, Clarke recognized that in fact the people he represented in his constituency should be foremost in his mind. He was successful as a constituency person because of that contact. Even those who were not of his political persuasion — Liberals, New Democrats and others — admired him because he did not discriminate against those who were not of his party. He was there to help all the people of his constituency.

He was up and down the concession roads and the side roads and the main highways of his constituency. He was at the community centres. He was a person who wanted to obtain for the people of his constituency as much as he could from the provincial government; in other words, the fair share for the people in the constituency, which didn't have many of the assets in terms of a tax base that a large urban constituency would have.

I remember he used to sit in the back row for the Conservatives and never felt this was a reason to be looked down upon at all. He saw it as a distinction, because once again he recognized that the people of his constituency came first. If any of us wanted to learn a lesson of how to deal with our individual constituents, of all political affiliations, from all backgrounds, a good cross-section of his constituency, we could learn from the life and the experience of Clarke Rollins.

All of us in the Liberal Party express our condolences to the family. The province of Ontario has lost a man of distinction.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I want to join in expressing condolences to Clarke Rollins's widow and family on his passing. I remember, when I was first elected to this assembly, as a rookie member I was a couple of times taken down a peg or two by Mr Rollins, who was by that time a long-serving veteran of the Legislature and who told me to slow down a bit, that "You might just learn something if you listened." Some people are still telling me that, I suppose.

Clarke Rollins was a member who served his constituents well, as other members have indicated. He knew his riding. He knew the people of the small communities and the farming community, and he served them in a way that many urban members may not fully appreciate, the way a member in a rural area can get to know people, to know the communities and to serve their interests, not necessarily by being particularly vocal at Queen's Park in debate but by ensuring that the needs of the communities and the families and individuals in the constituency were met on the basis of programs that were available from various ministries and, if the programs were not adequate, by expressing his views certainly in caucus but also behind the scenes to members of the government. Mr Rollins was very successful electorally because he served his constituents in that way.

One wag, I recall, once joked that Clarke Rollins had a philosophy that "If it walks, pension it; if it doesn't, pave it." I don't mean by that he was simply a ward-heeler but rather a person who understood the need to improve the infrastructure in his constituency to make it

possible for economic development to take place, because he was always concerned about the need for jobs in Hastings-Peterborough and in eastern Ontario.

Clarke Rollins served many years through many sessions, under three premiers in this Legislature. Previous to that, he served his community as a county politician and a municipal politician. He had a tremendous amount of support. He was held in high respect by his constituents and we, as members of the assembly and representatives of the people of the province, have lost a public servant in Clarke Rollins.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. I will ensure that the comments made by the members for Quinte, Hastings-Peterborough, St Catharines and Algoma are sent to the family.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GUARDIANSHIP OF INSTITUTIONALIZED CHILDREN

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. For several weeks now the Liberal critic for children's services has tried to work with your office to resolve the situation facing the Brown family. Despite our efforts and the even longer efforts of the Browns themselves, their situation remains unresolved.

The Browns are here today to request once again that you reconsider your government's policy to stop funding special needs arrangements for children like their son. Keith is an emotionally disturbed child. He was adopted by the Browns when he was three years of age and prior to joining the Browns, he was in an abusive home. The Browns have worked with local agencies for years trying to help Keith. But in 1994 Keith became violent and they realized that he needed more extensive help.

Keith has been assessed by local agencies, as well as by Dr Paul Steinhauer, a well-know psychiatrist at Sick Children's Hospital. They all agree that Keith needs to be in a residential program, as he is now, and that he needs the continued support of his family. But despite all the documentation, Minister, and all the pleas, you've refused to consider funding Keith's treatment. The children's aid society locally has said it would be detrimental to move Keith. Minister, I ask you why you think Keith's situation doesn't warrant —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Minister.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I would like to thank the honourable member for bringing this very important issue to my attention yet again. I will talk to staff again and see why we have not been able to come to a resolution for this family because I think we should try to see what we can do for those who are taking care of people with such difficulties.

**Mrs McLeod:** Minister, I think you should understand just how desperate the situation is. Like most parents, the Browns want whatever is best for Keith. The children's aid society, the psychiatrist, the case workers have all



agreed that what's best for Keith is where he is now: treatment in a residential treatment centre and staying in his family. Your government, your office and your representatives have consistently refused to make this possible.

What's absolutely crazy about this situation is the solution that has been proposed because, according to the local children's aid society, if the Browns will give up the custody of their child and he becomes a crown ward, the funding will be available. This is not about a lack of money, because the money is there for crown wards. It is not there for the children of families who want and must keep the care of their children.

We are told that Keith's is not the only case, that other families with other children's aid societies are in fact giving up their children as crown wards to make sure the funding for their children's treatment continues. Minister, why would you feel that you should force the Browns to give up their child in order that he can get the care he needs?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you again for the question. The difficulty we have is not that the minister or not that the staff who are trying so hard to work this out are forcing that family to do something. It's that the system we have, the services as they are being provided, the funding as it is given to those agencies is not meeting the needs of those families.

I share the frustration of the member opposite. We want to solve these problems. We are working very hard to solve these problems with those community agencies so families like this are not put in the situation where these individuals appear to be, because it is not doing them a good service; it is not helping the loved one they are trying to care for. So we do very much want to solve these problems.

1400

**Mrs McLeod:** Minister, this is not a case that comes newly to you in the Legislature. This is a case that you and your office have been dealing with for over two months now. Your own MPP, John O'Toole, has written to you repeatedly on their behalf and even he has stated that the minister's response is not more favourable and he regrets that.

In your own correspondence to the family, you suggested that the family meet with the case manager at the Durham children's aid society, that all the parties arrange a meeting, that they assist in developing an appropriate plan of action. They did that on November 7, and at that meeting they were told once again, not just by the children's aid society but by the representative of your ministry, that the best thing to do would be to make Keith a crown ward and that would ensure the funding he needs for care until he is 21 years of age.

Keith does not need protection; he does not need to become a ward of the crown. That is bad advice. I ask you now, will you intervene? Will you make sure that Keith gets the funding support he needs to stay in the treatment home and with his —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I did not mean to imply that somehow or other this was a new case. It's just that I have great difficulty and concern talking about individual details of families in a public venue such as this. It's

unfortunate that's where we are today. I hope we can find a resolution to this, because I know that everyone who was working on this case does not want to put this family in such a difficult position. I am very pleased to go back to my officials and say, "Why have we not been able to come up with a resolution for this?" and just see if we can. I would like to thank the honourable member for bringing this issue to my attention yet again.

## ECONOMIC STATEMENT

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Premier and it has to do with the announcement today that the fiscal and economic statement will be delivered tomorrow at 3:30. We are interested to see it being done in this fashion, but the government has indicated very clearly over the last month that this will be a very comprehensive document. The Minister of Finance indicated that the economic statement will outline an additional \$3 billion in cuts. That was Mr Eves. He also went on to say that the statement will outline the final \$3-billion expenditure reductions that we feel we have to make in order for us to balance the budget. So it's a much-anticipated statement tomorrow. We are anxiously awaiting it; certainly Ontario is anxiously awaiting the details of your spending cuts.

Premier, can you assure us that your statement tomorrow will indeed do what the Minister of Finance promised, and that is to outline those cuts?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think I'll leave the minister's statement for tomorrow on what all it will include, but he has indicated that some of the reductions we are still waiting for — the Crombie panel report for Who Does What — and that tomorrow's statement and meeting with the finance committee will be more of an update on where we are at with the fiscal update. He has clearly indicated that some of the decisions — there are a lot of very good news decisions to come out yet on some of the transfers and what not — will not be made tomorrow but will be made in the fullness of time, as soon as we can.

**Mr Phillips:** The Premier will know that Ontario and the financial community were fully expecting this to be a comprehensive statement. Frankly, the word is that you've got the thing apart and you can't get it back together, that the government is incompetent, that its fiscal plan is in tatters and the reason we're seeing this announcement tomorrow, which for the public you should recognize — 24 hours' notice, slammed together. It was promised for next week; it was promised to be a detailed outline; it was promised it would outline the transfer payments.

I gather from the Premier's answer it won't be there, so I will say to you that the financial community, the people of Ontario, the people who are going to be directly dramatically impacted by this are concerned about your competence. It looks like this statement will not do what you promised it would do only a few days ago.

Can you explain to the people of Ontario why suddenly you have decided that you are not going to tell the people the financial facts and that the statement tomorrow will be simply a small statement of a fiscal update and not what you had promised the people of Ontario?



**Hon Mr Harris:** I want to assure the member — I know that following the committee tomorrow with the Minister of Finance, the member will be the first to applaud and agree — that the statement tomorrow will outline that not only are we on schedule but ahead of schedule; that all our targets and goals are achievable perhaps even ahead of schedule; that there will be no new reductions other than the levels we have already announced; that jobs are up; that growth is up; that business confidence is up; that investor confidence is up. The investment community is also very supportive and very positive.

I hope the Minister of Finance doesn't mind my sharing those thoughts and perceptions, but that is what the details he will be sharing with you tomorrow will translate into.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I imagine you're excited about the answer, and I appreciate it, but we're cutting into question period with 15-second applause.

**Mr Phillips:** I say to the Premier that you can't fool people. They realize that you promised you would outline in detail. Frankly, you don't know what you're doing. You can't get it together. The Minister of Finance promised it, and now you can't deliver. You can't hide that. It was only a week ago that the Minister of Finance refused to come to the finance and economic affairs committee. He said he wouldn't show up. Now, a few days later, he says he wants to come and present it.

Premier, this is an embarrassment to your government. It is a sign of incompetence. It is a sign that you don't know what you're doing. It is a sign that you promised only a few days ago to outline in detail the cuts, and I gather from your answer we won't see it tomorrow.

Premier, it is clear from the financial reports we've seen coming out of the bond rating agencies that your tax cut is going to have to cost \$12 billion — that's what they say — in lost revenue. Every penny of that, you are going to have to go out and borrow. Will that document tomorrow outline why you want to borrow \$12 billion to fund your tax scheme while you are cutting hospitals, cutting school boards, cutting municipalities and making seniors pay for their drugs?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I appreciate the question and the opportunity. You refer to the bond rating. Dominion Bond Rating Service yesterday said that we're on track, that it's all achievable for this year and for next year. They say that if projections in future years are low, the numbers won't add up, that's right, so at one percentage point below forecast there will be additional reductions required. On the other hand we have a just over \$650-million contingency fund in there. We are very prudent. We are very conservative.

What the Dominion Bond Rating Service numbers indicate is that if the other estimates are one point higher, we'll have a \$3-billion surplus or we'll balance much sooner. But that is all in the future, that is in the out years and that is all speculation.

What will also happen tomorrow, with reference to the tax cut, is that the numbers will clearly show that the tax cut will not cost one cent, that in fact increased jobs,

increased growth in the economy and more taxpayers will repay every cent.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Mr Premier. New question, leader of the third party.

1410

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier as well, because people in this province are becoming quite concerned by the kinds of signals they're getting from the Premier and his Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance said earlier in the fall that there's going to be an economic statement where he's going to lay out what has to be cut and where those cuts are going to come from.

Premier, we know that above and beyond the \$8 billion in cuts you've already announced you will have to cut another \$3 billion. The Dominion Bond Rating Service has confirmed that. They've also confirmed that your fiscal plan is in trouble.

A press aide said today outside the cabinet scrum that hospitals and colleges and school boards and municipalities would have to wait until the new year to find out what the cuts are going to be. Premier, do you confirm this? Is your government going to force all those people to wait until the new year to find out how much they're going to be cut and how many more jobs are going to be lost?

**Hon Mr Harris:** No, I can't confirm that. That's not been decided, that's not the intention of the government at this point in time, so that's not confirmable. Second, the Dominion Bond Rating Service says not one more penny needs to be cut to balance the books exactly as we said we would do in the Common Sense Revolution. What they say is that if growth in 1998, 1999 and 2000 is in excess of our very prudent projections, the budget will be balanced sooner or we could reduce even less, or if there is a major recession we'll have to revisit it. Quite right, that's exactly what we said, based on our projections. They are now saying unequivocally, unabashedly, based upon our projections, the Common Sense Revolution adds up to the penny. Not another cent needs to be cut.

**Mr Hampton:** This is precisely why people out there get confused by the Premier. He comes in and says there is good news. People want to know what that good news is. People don't understand why the government keeps delaying its economic statement; people don't understand why they're not going to get an economic statement tomorrow; people don't understand why they're going to have to wait until the new year.

Premier, we know you have to cut another \$3 billion. We know that money will have to come from hospitals, schools, municipalities, colleges and universities and that those cuts will mean thousands of jobs lost. Why don't you just stop the doubletalk? Why don't you simply say to people now, before Christmas, so they have time to plan their budgets, so they have time to deal with your cuts: How serious are the cuts going to be, how many people are going to lose their jobs and what are the impacts going to be?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Certainly the Minister of Finance tomorrow will be laying out for you what has been happening over the past year, a fiscal update which will



show you we are either on track or ahead of track in all the projections that are there. Second, before Christmas we will be laying out, as the Crombie reports and a number of decisions are made, all the decisions that are there. I would say within the next few months we will have laid out the projections right through to the year 2000 as we see them.

I can't imagine anybody sensing that there is any concern on this side of the House. If anything, our only concern is that we may balance the books ahead of schedule in the Common Sense Revolution. But that's three or four years out. We're not making —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Ottawa East, come to order — particularly the singing; come to order on the singing as well.

**Mr Hampton:** This is the root of the problem: Last spring the Premier said to the public that there will be no more cuts. Then the Minister of Finance earlier this fall started saying there will be more cuts and acknowledging that there will be billions in more cuts; the Minister of Education and Training starts talking about \$600 million, \$800 million from education.

Premier, people are getting really confused by your government. You are starting to look like the Mad Hatter, continually saying one thing but meaning another. Your Minister of Finance, the March Hare, is frantic because he is late and cannot make his date with the people. Then you've got your Chair of Management Board, the Queen of Hearts, who announces that 750 Ministry of Transportation workers are gone. Off with their heads.

It would be funny except it is sad —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Government members, come to order, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Dufferin-Peel come to order, and the member for Grey-Owen Sound, you come to order as well.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Grey-Owen Sound, just come to order.

Okay, thank you very much, go ahead.

**Mr Hampton:** It might be funny but the fact is it's sad. People are losing their jobs, hospitals are going to close, children are going to be cut in their classrooms. You have a responsibility to let those schools, those colleges, those universities, those hospitals, those municipalities know how much money you are going to take from them, how many people are going to lose their jobs. You have a responsibility to let them know that now, not some time in the new year. Premier, when are you going to do it?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me take exception to a couple of things the member said. Talking about job losses, the net job losses were your legacy: five years, 10,000 net job losses.

You alluded to health care cuts and you alluded to classroom education cuts. I want to assure the people of Ontario that in spite of the fact that Paul Martin has cut \$2 billion out of these things, there will not be one cent cut from health care in the province of Ontario. There has

not been and there will not be, nor will there be from classroom education.

Let me also assure the people concerned about jobs that contrary to the NDP record of 10,000 lost jobs, there are now 130,000 net new jobs in Ontario; even after some job losses, net new. We expect that kind of net job growth to continue and escalate in the years ahead.

## EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My second question is for the Premier as well.

And you should know that there are 57,000 more people unemployed in this province now as opposed to last year. That's how far you're falling behind.

Thanks to the efforts of groups like People for Education, Mothers for Education and the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition to Save Education, parents all across the province gathered at constituency offices this morning to protest your cuts to their children's education. Soon they will have even more to protest. Your caucus had a presentation last week on your government's plans for education, plans that include \$800 million in new cuts next year. Are you planning to cut another \$800 million from the school board budgets? Are you planning to do that?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I know the Minister of Education would be delighted to answer that.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I apologize for the delay in responding; I was just handed a note.

For the member who said you hear the same answer every day, it's because we get the same question every day. The same answer is the one that I think satisfies the majority of the people in the province, and that's the reason why the majority of the parents and taxpayers are behind this government in its move to have a more affordable school system, a more accountable school system and a higher quality school system. That's what we promised the people of Ontario and that's what this government will deliver.

**Mr Hampton:** Minister, it was a very simple question. We know that your caucus has had several discussions in the last couple of weeks about education cuts and about where you're going in education. The simple question is: Are you planning to cut \$800 million more from education?

While I'm at it, we also understand that part of your agenda includes a 5% rollback of the salaries of classroom teachers who are already doing more with less, and we also understand that you intend to introduce legislation to limit teachers' preparation time.

So I ask you again: Are you going to cut a further \$800 million from education and are you introducing legislation to roll back teachers' wages by 5% and to limit preparation time, yes or no?

1420

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I was pleased to note a moment or two ago from the leader of the third party's comments that he has read a book recently, *Alice in Wonderland*, and apparently he's now taking a trip to a Fantasy Island of some sort, because this conjecture on his part is not grounded and is without grounding.



Let me assure the leader of the third party of this: that what I've been discussing with my colleagues over the last few weeks and in fact the last few months is how to ensure that there is a sufficient amount of funding to have a high-quality school system for every student in the province and how to make absolutely certain that there isn't a second-class student in Ontario. I can assure the leader of the third party that there will be sufficient funds and there will not be second-class students.

**Mr Hampton:** Let me try again, because it's a very simple question. We know that the Conservative caucus has been discussing cuts to education. I want to ask the minister again, are you planning to cut \$800 million more from education and are you planning to roll back teachers' salaries by 5% and are you planning on placing limits on teachers' preparation time? They're simple questions. People deserve an answer. Are you planning on these initiatives, yes or no?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Thank you to the leader of the third party for an opportunity to rise in this House again to tell you exactly what my colleagues and I have been talking about. We have been talking about ways to ensure that there is a sufficient amount of funding to ensure a quality education for every student in this province. We have been talking about how to raise student achievement in this province so that we're no longer in the middle of the pack, so that our students in Ontario go to the front of the class, so that we have the best student achievement in the world. That's what my colleagues and I have been talking about.

You are having a flashback, sir. You are having a flashback to the time when your government was in power and you were imposing the social contract and you were raising the number of students in classrooms around the province. The leader of the third party is simply having a flashback.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Minister of Health. Your restructuring commission has struck again, this time in Lambton county. At first, people in the area were almost relieved because it appeared there wasn't going to be any actual hospital closure in Lambton county, but as it turns out, the commission hadn't stopped bulldozing community hospitals; it was just being a little less open about what it was doing. The fact is that all 52 acute care beds of the county hospital in Petrolia are being wiped out; they're being lost. The hospital is being left with 20 chronic care beds and the future of those beds is "still pending." The 24-hour emergency department is being closed and all that the county's being left with is an 18-hour walk-in clinic.

Minister, the three area hospitals and the district health council had all agreed on a plan that would leave the Petrolia hospital intact and the commission said they thought the local plan made sense. Why did the commission turn that around and decide to plow under the county hospital in Petrolia?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** As you know, the ministry, as one of the parties to this process, is undergoing its review now. We're in the 30-day period

where the community and the ministry and other people will make their responses to the commission. If it turns out like some of the other decisions the commission has made in other communities, at the end of the day I think we've seen very good acceptance and a willingness to work with the directives the commission has put forward in Sudbury and in Thunder Bay. Perhaps that surprised some of us, in terms of the communities agreeing with many of the decisions the commission has made to date. I think its track record is pretty good. We have to respect the process that's set out in law, and this is the period for all parties to comment and voice their concerns to the commission.

**Mrs McLeod:** I can tell you what the residents of Petrolia are saying, what they're feeling. I can tell you about the concerns of surrounding communities like Wyoming, Watford, Oakdale and Oil Springs. They were numb at first, but now they're angry and they're frightened. They want to know what's going to happen if a resident has the misfortune of suffering a heart attack in the six hours their walk-in clinic is going to be closed. What happens to that person? A nurse at the Petrolia hospital has said that six-hour shutdown will force desperately sick or injured people to drive at least half an hour to get emergency care. She says that people are going to die, and you don't care.

It happened, coincidentally, that the member Mr Beaubien was away when the commission decided to bring down its report; he happened to be out of the country. Tomorrow the residents of Lambton county are going to be marching on Mr Beaubien's office, and we know that Mr Beaubien and his neighbour, Mr Boushy, have no reservations about telling it is like it is. I think it's important that you tell us today, Minister, what Mr Beaubien should tell his constituents tomorrow. Will you back his constituents' concerns about community health care, care in their own community, or will you simply let your commission go ahead and bulldoze their community hospital?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I think all members should remind their constituents of the need to restructure, and all parties are on the record in this House as not debating the fact that the status quo cannot be maintained in our health care system. In light of federal cuts and in light of a growing and aging population, we have to change the system and we have to have a better system.

Today, people do fall between the cracks. We don't have that integration, that seamless continuum of care that health care providers and patients talk about. We don't have a perfect health care system out there now. If we don't address that system and bring restructuring and an integrated vision to it, and if we don't allow the commission to do its work without politicians getting involved, then we're not going to have much of a system at all to leave to our children and grandchildren, let alone present-day patients.

We have to move on what nurses and doctors and health care providers and patients themselves are asking for: a fully integrated system and, at the end of the day, a better system where we've cut the layers of administration, we've cut the waste, we've cut the duplication and we've driven every dollar humanly possible —



**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. New question.

### CHILD CARE

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I would like to send over to you this full-page ad from the Toronto Star. You'll see that there are thousands and thousands of names that have been placed in the Toronto Star, and there are ads like this with local names in 41 other communities across the province today. Tens of thousands of parents and others felt that this was the only way they could talk to you and challenge your child care review.

You failed to consult with families across the province. Invitation-only round tables are not community consultation. You have refused to have public hearings. You have not even told people what the time frame is for your consultation. As I travelled the province and met with people, I met with people in communities you went to where you held round tables before your report and where you have not gone back: in Ottawa for example, in Sudbury for example, in Hamilton, in west Toronto and on and on.

Minister, on October 2 you said, and I'm quoting from Hansard, "The list of groups that I've met with before...are the same group of individuals that we will be meeting with again in the future."

Two direct questions: On what date does your consultation process end and, second, will you live up to your commitment in Hansard and meet with the individuals and organizations —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Thank you very much for the question from the member opposite. I'm looking forward to whatever report she may wish to provide me, information on what she gathered in her hearings across the province. I had the opportunity to attend a portion of her first hearing, and I think those may well be of assistance in terms of the consultation we are doing. I have indeed met with the organizations that I met with before the report, I have met with them again — my staff. There are continuing to be discussions and consultations with them to get their input and feedback as we decide what to do.

1430

As I'm sure the honourable member knows, we have \$200 million more that we've allocated for child care. That's \$600 million. That's more than any other government in Ontario has had allocated for child care. I must also remind the member that that's more than twice what Quebec spends on child care, that's more than twice what Alberta spends on child care per capita, more than three times what the NDP is spending in Saskatchewan and about 10 times as much as the Liberal government in New Brunswick. So we do have financial commitments —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Government members. Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms Lankin:** Minister, you have not met with the same organizations that you met with before. Karen McMaster

and others in Hamilton you met with on April 12 are still waiting to hear back to their request for you to come back to their community and meet with them again. The Sudbury group you met with on March 8 has not been contacted by your office for a follow-up meeting. Charlyn Monahan and the Ottawa group that met with you on February 27 have been waiting to hear from you for when you're coming back.

Minister, don't tell us that you've met with these people. You promised on October 2 that you would meet with the same groups and individuals you met with before. Your commitment's in Hansard. It is clear. Will you go back to those communities?

Second, there are communities that you didn't go to. Let me tell you about a Northumberland child care forum. They sent you date after date after date asking you to come and explain your proposals to them. You denied. You refused to go. Carol Watson, a farm wife in Markdale, made a public plea for you to come to her community and to meet with others so she could talk about rural child care.

Again, two questions: Will you tell us the date for the end of your consultation period so we know what we're dealing with and, second, will you return to these communities that you met with before and meet with —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I don't have Hansard in front of me, but I believe the honourable member had been asking me about the groups and associations that I had met with. I had a list of them in the report, and I read into Hansard on one of the occasions the list of the associations and the organizations that represent child care in this province. I have indeed met with those groups and organizations. Have I been able to meet with every one of the hundreds of —

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** If the honourable member would like me to answer the question, I'd be pleased to do so, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** New question.

### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** My question today is to the Attorney General. A constituent from the Niagara area, Shirley, is here today in the members' gallery. She has come all the way from Niagara Falls because she wants to see Bill 82 passed into law. She has been working very hard with Bart Maves, the member for Niagara Falls, who was unable to join us today because he's home with his wife and their newborn daughter, Ainslie. Attorney General, she feels that the only way she can receive her \$13,000 now owed to her by her ex-husband is to see Bill 82 passed. Shirley herself says he has changed his whole lifestyle to elude paying support to her. She believes the most effective way to get the money to her kids is through the suspension of his driver's licence.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Oriole, come to order. Thank you. And the member for Welland-Thorold as well, come to order.



**Mr Hudak:** Shirley would like this question asked and I appreciate the chance to ask it. Thank you for that, Mr Speaker.

Attorney General, how are you going to help Shirley get the money that's owed to her?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I thank the member for Niagara South for the question. I can't comment specifically on this case. However, Bill 82 would give us the ability to suspend driver's licences. Anyone who relies on their licence will want to pay their arrears or enter into an arrangement with the support plan to pay those arrears. This will help us get money into the hands of women and children who depend on it. Without these enforcement tools, this plan runs a deficit of \$100 million a year. We need Bill 82, and I hope we can get that bill passed to help Shirley and other women just like her.

**Mr Hudak:** As I said, Shirley drove here today all the way from Niagara Falls.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Tim, ask him about Downsview.

**The Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, please come to order.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** In the supplementary, ask when he introduced the bill and then when he called it. For 39 days that bill sat without being called.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Forty-nine.

**Mr Bradley:** For 49 days, Mr Premier, you let that sit on the order paper.

**The Speaker:** Member for St Catharines, come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Thank you. The member for Niagara South.

**Mr Hudak:** Again to the Attorney General, Shirley came all the way from Niagara Falls hoping to see Bill 82 debated. Basically, she wants to know when she can look forward to the passage of Bill 82 so that action can be taken to help her and others like the women who have been to my office in similar situations. When do you think this bill will become law?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Thank you for the question. This legislation is a priority for this government. Every member of this House, I would hope, would want to help Shirley and people in her situation and people who are feeling the effects of \$100 million of deficit every year because we don't have tools within the plan to collect this money.

I'm dismayed that this afternoon we're going to be debating an opposition day motion where we're being asked to withdraw this bill, because the effect of that will be to hurt people like Shirley, to hurt children, to hurt people who are not seeing any effective collection being made and who are seeing \$100 million added to the debt of this plan every year. I would hope that members would vote against this opposition day motion and would support what people like Shirley and her children need.

#### HIGHWAY INSPECTORS

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** A question to the Minister of Transportation: Yesterday you proudly announced

the layoff of 700 inspectors and technicians from your ministry, probably the largest layoff in one day in the history of this province. What do you have to say to the 700 families who lost their jobs just before Christmas? What do you have to say to their children? What do you have to say to these men and women and their families?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** Because of the neglect of previous governments, we've had to put our money to use in protecting our infrastructure. With the duplication that presently exists within MTO, we must streamline MTO and be a much more productive deliverer.

As far as the services that these people delivered are concerned, we have a very good construction industry in the province of Ontario, a very good, mature construction industry, and we also have very capable engineers, renowned throughout the world, who are very capable of making sure that whatever safety the honourable member might be thinking about is not going to be compromised. The job will still get done.

**Mr Colle:** I think that's going to be very comforting to some of those children who won't have a Christmas present. Minister, you certainly have rewarded the construction companies with an early Christmas present. Now all the Ministry of Transportation will do is write cheques and then, when the highways fall apart, you'll write more cheques. How can you tell us with a straight face that the safety standards won't be compromised when you're allowing companies to inspect themselves? Who is going to ensure that they don't cut corners and don't compromise safety standards when those who enforce those standards and act as the public's watchdog are gone? Who's going to be the enforcement agent now?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** First of all, this government has been very up front with our plan and also with the people who unfortunately have been laid off. I might add that the settlement was a very lucrative settlement, and certainly we're also confident that even with these layoffs and with the potential work the private sector is going to be taking on a lot of these people are going to end up finding jobs with the private sector. But it's still very important.

I want the honourable member to understand that we are still the owners of the highway. MTO still owns the highway. The private sector is in a very good position to deliver the services we need. The inspectors who are going to be required to make sure that safety is not going to be compromised will be there. I say to the honourable member that this government is committed to making sure that our provincial highway infrastructure is going to once again —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister, thank you.

1440

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Yesterday when you replaced the current WCB with your new Bill 99 you said this was a move from compensation to prevention. Well, you're certainly moving away from compensation



and you've got injured workers angry across the province. I say to you it's a public relations sham to suggest that you're moving seriously to prevention.

I have here a leaked cabinet document entitled Cabinet Submission Proposal and Recommendation relating to the Occupational Health and Safety Act. It calls for enhancing the flexibility and reconsideration of the right to refuse unsafe work. The concept of enhanced flexibility is explained in an attached document.

You're going to create something called "the good employer program" and you're going to give the power to determine who sits on health and safety committees, the frequency of when they meet and inspection schedules to employers. Most unbelievably you're going to ensure that they may even be subjected to fewer, if any, ministry labour inspections. Minister, do you deny you're planning to give this kind of gift to your corporate friends in addition to the \$6 billion?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I think the member opposite needs to realize there are various submissions prepared. At the end of the day there is one submission that goes forward. But I certainly make the commitment to you: I am just as committed to health and safety and the prevention of workplace accidents as you are.

In fact, last year, just for your information, we actually increased the number of inspections in this province by 7%. That was despite the fact that we had a six-week OPSEU strike. So I indicate to you we are strongly committed to health and safety and that our focus will be on prevention.

**Mr Christopherson:** I suggest to the minister that the document tells a very different story. If you are so proud of what you are doing in terms of prevention, why are you afraid to go out and have full public consultations?

Your document gives you various options in terms of the kind of consultation you could have around changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The pros of the one you rejected were: "Broadly inclusive process. Stakeholders, both organizational and individual...will be presented with an opportunity to input." This would have been a comprehensive tour involving public hearings in major Ontario centres. The con to that recommendation was: "Substantial exposure in local/regional media could result in criticism of the government/ministry agenda."

Minister, why don't you admit you can't defend your record on prevention any more than you can on compensation? Why don't you stand in your place now and say you'll accept the recommendation and that cabinet document that calls for full, public, province-wide consultations, the very thing we've had to force you into, time after time?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I simply suggest to you there are certain decisions that have not been made. You're very premature to be spreading information which is not totally accurate. When you were in office you actually cut the Ministry of Labour by \$63 million and eliminated 351 positions. You cut health and safety inspectors by 8%.

We are committed. You see the new vision in the new act we have on compensation. We have the new focus. We have done more than you ever did in five years.

## EDUCATION REFORM

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** My question is to the Minister of Education. Today was a day of protest, as the leader of the third party has stated, organized by some parents and supported in part by the teachers' unions and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. What assurances can you give parents all across this province, not just those who took part in this protest, that their children will receive a high-quality education?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the honourable member for the question. As we entered the chamber this afternoon I was discussing with my colleague the member for Halton North about today, about parents arriving in various riding offices to talk about education. In fact, the member had a couple of parents arrive in his office and was able to spend an hour or so with those parents talking about what this government has been doing. I understand from the people in my constituency office that we have had a couple of parents arrive today and I hope to have a chance to talk with them personally later on in the day.

It seems that parents, rightly so, are very concerned about the quality of education their students receive in this province. I've talked to hundreds of parents all over the province, and the message they send is very clear: They expect high standards of student achievement in our school system and they're dissatisfied with the mediocre results we have been producing over time in our school system.

I have assured those parents, and I'm proud to stand in this House today and assure parents across the province, that we as a government, my colleagues and I will not accept mediocre students —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister.

**Mrs Ross:** Minister, what are you doing to make sure the government reaches out to parents? Is it your intention to conduct regular consultations with them?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** As I mentioned in my first answer, I personally, and lots of my colleagues, have spent a great deal of time talking with parents right across the province, listening to their concerns and talking about some of the solutions this government is putting in place for the education system. On top of that we are engaged right now in a consultative process without parallel in the province's history.

I believe this is a subject of importance to parents and taxpayers across the province. We have two and a half million copies of our suggestions about education reform, secondary school reform, out with parents and students. We've received over 5,000 responses to date, and I recently announced that we're going to extend that consultation process to hear more from parents.

On top of that, we recently pledged to parents higher standards for student achievement in this province, and we've gone past that —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

## EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. It is good to



know that the minister is finally taking note, because what's happening is an unprecedented activity. It's unprecedented because it involves parents. I don't know about you, but I've never seen parents organized or begin to organize the way they are now. I think what you're seeing today is only the tip of the iceberg.

In 40 to 50 communities all across this province parents are staying home from work to make their point. It's not just that they're concerned with quality, Minister, they're concerned with what you're doing. You implied earlier that parents support you in your fight for quality, but parents are concerned with what you're doing. What are you going to tell parents who are out there saying, "We want you to slow down; we want you to stop cutting education"? What are you going to say to those parents, and do you believe they're off track?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** As I said earlier, the member for Halton North had two parents in his riding office today. I had two parents in my riding office today. We're glad to speak with parents and we're happy they came out and really honour their commitment to their children. We have that same commitment.

I can tell you what parents have told me. Parents have told me they want to make absolutely certain that the standards of education in the province of Ontario produce superior results in student achievement. They are not satisfied with a system that is below Bulgaria's in terms of math results. They think we should be at the top of the world, not in the middle of the pack. So our pledge to parents to move the students to the front of the class has been well received by parents across this province, and our commitment not to send their children the bill for education. Your government, sir, and your government passed the bill for education on to the children. This government will not.

1450

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Minister, the parents are telling the rest of us that they're worried about the erosion of public education. They're worried about increased class sizes. They're worried about less resources being available for their children. They're worried about less flexibility in the system. They're worried about the lack of special education resources available to those children with special needs. They're worried about the direction you're going in. They're worried about the speed you're going in. They're worried that they're not going to have a system in place that will ensure the needs of future students.

My question to you is simple: Will you assure those parents who were protesting today that you can guarantee that your next round of cuts will not negatively affect or impact any student in any classroom anywhere in Ontario? Can you give them that reassurance?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I can tell you this. I've talked to parents right across this province repeatedly and they have told me this about the speed of change: They want higher standards for their students and they want them now. They want a system of education that doesn't pass the bill on to their children and they want that now. They want improvements in our system now. We've heard those parents and we will have those improvements now.

I can assure the parents of Ontario, because I already have. Myself, my colleagues, this government have made a pledge to parents — we've publicized that pledge to parents — that we will raise the standards of education in this province, and we intend to be held to account for that promise.

## FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is to the Attorney General. Yesterday in London, seven family support plan recipients filed an application in the Ontario family court asking that there be an injunction against the director of the family support plan to compel the director to pay all the payments owing to those recipients which had been received by the plan and to find the director in contempt of court for having failed to remit the support payments to those people which had already come in to the coffers of the plan. Their lawyer states in the application that every one of these seven women's problems started when the London regional office closed down. It's been reported that these women are owed \$5,175 and that they have confirmed that their ex-partners have paid this money into the family support plan.

Attorney General, you've dismantled the family support plan. You're forcing women to seek legal action against the plan in order for them to get the payments that they are legally owed and that have been collected. Why are you forcing women to the expense of seeking legal action in order to get the money the plan has owed —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Attorney General.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** In the first few weeks of November we've disbursed cheques to 115,000 people. As we reorganize the family support plan, one of the building blocks to doing that is Bill 82. I can tell you that Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears has written to the leader of the third party and has said: "We believe that the Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, is good legislation and will accomplish our goals for tougher enforcement. That is why we need you to stop your political games and expedite the passage of the legislation. Putting your political motives ahead of the needs of Ontario's children is reprehensible. Shame on you." That's what Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears says about your tactics.

**Mrs Boyd:** The mothers against fathers in default, or whatever your group is called, are quite right that the enforcement issues —

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Show a little respect. That's typical: Run down the people of the province of Ontario, run down the groups. That's your attitude. Take it out on the mothers.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** Mr Speaker, I apologize to the group. I only know them by their acronym, which is MAFIA, and I didn't know the details of the name. I know very well



that they have lobbied hard to have the enforcement issues in your bill put in place, and we have told you again and again that we support those enforcement measures. What we don't support is that those women could find themselves completely cut off the plan because your plan under this bill is to stop collecting money when it costs you too much.

You have already said that 450 million outstanding dollars are going to be written off, and many of those dollars are owed to that group that has been trying for years and years to collect that money. Why don't you come clean and say that your bill is not just about enforcement, that it's enabling you to stop collecting dollars, \$450 million, that are owed women like the women who run MAFIA?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** It defies logic to be able to stand up and say that they support the bill, yet in their motion this afternoon they're asking for the bill to be withdrawn. Let me tell you that MAFIA met with them, and here's what they say. They say to the leader of the third party: "While your party was in power, you gave us empty promises of passing effective and meaningful legislation to stop the abusive parents who neglected their responsibility to pay support to their children. Now you're in a position to ensure quick passage of this important legislation and you are failing us again."

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** That's \$450 million you're going to write off, Charles. Gone.

**The Speaker:** Order, member for Sudbury East.  
1500

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: According to section 21(a) of the standing orders, "Privileges are the rights enjoyed by the House collectively and by the members of the House individually conferred by the Legislative Assembly...."

Speaker, last Friday I received a fax in my office from the Ministry of the Attorney General over the signature of Abby Katz Starr, manager, issues and MPP liaison. This letter in part says, "As promised at the family support constituency briefings held Wednesday, November 20, and Thursday, November 21, here is the follow-up action."

I asked my staff if they had attended a constituency meeting. They said they knew nothing about it. So my staff called Abby Katz Starr and her answer, which I received today, was this: She blamed the mixup on temporary help. The letter we received was supposed to go to their caucus only.

Speaker, I think this smacks of partisanship in the extreme by withholding information with regard to briefings on a very important issue that's been raised for weeks in this House, and that is the family support plan. I feel my privilege has been breached and I would ask your assistance in this matter.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you for your help, the member for Ottawa Centre. Although I listened carefully to your point of privilege, it's a meeting that was organized outside of this place, and the involvement of people with respect to the bureaucracy and so on is not within the purview of the Speaker.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Review it.

**The Speaker:** No, no. I appreciate what you're saying but, once again, often the refrain from the Speaker's dais is that I have limited powers in this place and they really revolve around this building and the precinct itself. If a minister —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** If a minister calls a meeting, it's a meeting called by the minister or the staff of the minister or whoever works in the ministry office. Again I say to the members opposite, it's not up to the Speaker to determine who can and can't call a meeting and who can and can't go. It's not the job of the Speaker. I appreciate it. Thank you.

**Mr Crozier:** Mr Speaker, just briefly and further on the same point of order: If I may refer to the standing orders, it says the "rights enjoyed by the House collectively and by the members of the House individually." It doesn't say anything about whether it happens in this House or not. It says "members of the House." You're telling me, then, that a minister can brief caucus members of the government on an issue that involves tens of thousands of people in this province, in my riding and in other ridings, and there's absolutely nothing that can be done about it.

**The Speaker:** Yes, that's fundamentally what I'm saying.

## PETITIONS

### SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the 800,000 children who ride the school buses of Ontario are at risk and their safety is in jeopardy from unsafe drivers who are not stopping for school buses; and

"Whereas the current school bus law is difficult to enforce since not only is a licence plate number required but positive identification of the driver and vehicle as well, which makes it extremely difficult to obtain a conviction;

"Therefore, be it resolved, that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That private member's Bill 78 be passed. The bill doubles the existing range of fines for identified drivers and establishes vehicle owner liability.

"We ask for the support of all members of the Legislature."

There are a number of signatures and I have attached mine as well.

### ADULT EDUCATION

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a petition of about 300 signatures here from students from the Jones Avenue school, some of whom happen to be here today to hear me read their petition. It reads:

"We, the undersigned students of Jones Avenue school, believe the government's proposal to cut the educational



budget will jeopardize our future. If Jones Avenue is closed or totally altered, we will have fewer opportunities to learn. If it results in larger classes, it means less individual attention for all the students. The learning effects will be diminished.

"If, as suggested, we are pushed to go to night school, that means we have fewer opportunities to learn as regular students. Also, night school is not secure for women. At night school the teachers and students may not have enough time to know each other.

"Most of the students are new immigrants. They should have opportunities to learn Canadian speaking and Canadian experiences; otherwise, it is painful for them. Many students have successfully completed their credit courses at Jones and they can find good jobs due to their high level of English. They are now contributing to Canadian society. Before, when they were less fluent, their job prospects were low. They had to collect welfare in order to survive in Toronto, an expensive city to live in."

I agree totally with this petition and will sign it myself.

**Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York):** I have a petition pertaining to the level of funding for adult day school credit courses signed by approximately 600 constituents from the Premier's riding of Nipissing. It appears to be in the standard form and I'm submitting it on their behalf today.

#### TAX REDUCTION

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, request that the Legislature of Ontario not approve any tax cuts until the causes of poverty and unemployment in Ontario are dealt with effectively and until the province's debt and deficit are paid down."

It's signed by a number of my constituents and I've added my signature.

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I have a petition that reads:

"This petition protests the nearly \$1 billion the government plans to cut from Ontario's school budgets by November 1996. We call upon Premier Mike Harris and Education Minister John Snobelen to guarantee adequate funding for our schools so that our kids get the benefit of a quality education."

It is signed by 560 students from Roden Public School in my riding and I'm pleased to affix my signature to it.

#### RIDEAU REGIONAL CENTRE

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** I have a petition forwarded from a representative of the employees of the Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls.

We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, beg leave to petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced the downsizing initiatives as well as closure of first-rate community-based facilities for developmentally disabled adults; and

"Whereas Rideau Regional Centre is not an 'institution' in the traditional sense and is a community in and of itself for those who reside there; and

"Whereas the care provided at Rideau Regional Centre is of a specialized nature requiring highly trained, skilled and dedicated staff; and

"Whereas these clients of Rideau Regional Centre have no desire to leave their home community to be repatriated and isolated in a community they have no relationship with; and

"Whereas the economy of Smiths Falls and area would be devastated by the downsizing and closure of Rideau Regional Centre;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned residents of Ontario, demand that the decision to downsize and close these facilities be revoked and that the clients of the Rideau Regional Centre be allowed to continue living with dignity, stability and without threat in the community they call their home."

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature to it as well.

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from Local 175 of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union on behalf of the 55 employees at the IGA in Bancroft where scabs are going across the legitimate picket line and splitting that community up in such a serious way. It's been forwarded to me, by the way, by Mike Fraser, the president of the local, and Wayne Hanley, the secretary-treasurer, as well as Bob Linton, their communications liaison. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 55 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 175, who are employed at the Bancroft IGA have been on strike since October 21, 1996, in an attempt to gain a fair and just collective agreement; and

"Whereas the employer has been found in violation on nine separate provisions of the Ontario Labour Relations

Act and has failed to comply with the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) directives; and

"Whereas UFCW Local 175 has filed a contempt of court motion with the Ontario Court of Justice in order to enforce compliance with the order of the OLRB; and

"Whereas the employer, who is also the immediate past chairman of the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers, has instituted the use of replacement workers; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario is witnessing growing labour unrest as a result of actions such as has been taken by the owner of the Bancroft IGA, in particular with the use of replacement workers;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to restore the ban on replacement workers and bring forth labour legislation that restores a fair and equitable balance between labour and management, which was contained in the previous NDP government's Bill 40."

On behalf of my caucus colleagues, I add my name to theirs.

1510

#### PAROLE SYSTEM

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Progressive Conservative government has passed a resolution urging the government of Canada to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada to ensure that convicted murderers serve their entire sentences; and

"Whereas convicted first-degree murderers are allowed to apply to the court for a reduction of the parole ineligibility period; and

"Whereas victims' families must relive the horrors of the original crime through a jury hearing for this early parole and relive this every time the killer is given rehearings for early parole; and

"Whereas the provincial government must bear a large degree of the costs involved with a jury hearing;

"We, the undersigned, ask the Attorney General of Ontario to request the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada to reconsider his decision under Bill C-45 and to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada."

I attach my signature to this petition.

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

"Whereas the Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants and allows for security and stability in their homes and communities; and

"Whereas lifting rent control in Ontario would leave tenants with uncontrollable rent increases and financial instability; and

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favouring easier and faster eviction by landlords;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to save rent control."

I affix my signature, with the thousands of people who have signed this.

#### ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario.

"Whereas we, the undersigned, believe that helping reduce crime and abuse in our communities is our responsibility as employees of the Ministry of Correctional Services, as professionals in related fields and as concerned citizens;

"That closing institutions which provide specialized services to women and treatment to men does not achieve that goal;

"That physical, emotional and sexual abuse is often transmitted from one generation to the next, with tremendous cost to society;

"That treatment aimed at breaking that cycle must include the abuser so that another generation of children is not raised with the same destructive lessons;

"That the Ontario Correctional Institute is a therapeutic community known around the world for their techniques;

"That research statistics support anecdotal evidence that we are effective in changing abusive behaviour;

"That a therapeutic community cannot exist in a superprison;

"Therefore, we urge you to save victims and money by keeping open what works."

This is a petition signed by about 200 —

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Thank you for the petition.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the child care community of Prince Edward county, consisting of parents, guardians, child care providers, caregivers and members of organizations associated with children and child care wish to formally and respectfully respond to the 1996 Child Care Review;

"Whereas this same community applauds Janet Ecker, MPP, and her team for preparing, in consultation with a wide range of Ontarians, a thorough Child Care Review committed to developing a child care system which offers families a wide range of quality child care options which are accountable, affordable and accessible;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To consider the response to the Child Care Review prepared by Prince Edward child care services and submitted to Gary Fox, MPP, which we have read and believe to contain certain proposed directions which may not serve to effectively meet the objectives established by the review."

I affix my signature to these 100-plus signatures.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I'm still receiving petitions against the \$2 user fee for prescription drugs. It reads as follows:



"Whereas the Ministry of Health has started to charge seniors and social assistance recipients a \$2 user fee for each prescription filled on July 15, 1996; and

"Whereas seniors on a fixed income do not significantly benefit from the income tax savings created by this user fee copayment or from other non-health user fees; and

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the \$2 user fee will not compensate for the suffering and misery that's been caused by this user fee, or the painstaking task involved to fill out the application forms; and

"Whereas the current Ontario Minister of Health, Jim Wilson, promised as an opposition MPP in a July 5, 1993, letter to Ontario pharmacists that his party would not endorse legislation that will punish patients to the detriment of health care in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge the Progressive Conservative "government to repeal this user fee plan because the tax-saving user fee concept is not fair, sensitive or accessible to low-income or fixed-income seniors; and lest we forget, our province's seniors have paid their dues by collectively contributing to the social, economic, moral and political fabric of Canada."

I agree with this petition and I am affixing my signature to it.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario; and

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear that they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"We, the undersigned" — there are literally hundreds of them from Sault Ste Marie, 829, who have signed this — "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

I signed my name to this.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr Laughren from the standing committee on government agencies presented the committee's 26th report.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Pursuant to standing order 106(g)(11), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr Barrett from the standing committee on regulations and private bills presented the following report and moved its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill Pr71, An Act respecting the City of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

1520

## OPPOSITION DAY

### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

Mr Hampton moved opposition day motion number 5: Whereas Mike Harris and Charles Harnick promised to improve the family support program; and

Whereas Mike Harris promised in the Common Sense Revolution that "Government should concentrate its efforts on tracking down 'deadbeat' parents and enforcing payment orders"; and

Whereas the Ministry of the Attorney General closed all the family support plan regional offices and laid off 290 staff, in order to fund the government's tax giveaway to the wealthiest Ontarians; and

Whereas the closure of the family support plan's regional offices have caused hardship and suffering for women and children who were previously receiving regular payments; and

Whereas the cuts to the family support plan have eliminated community-based services; and

Whereas the loss of experienced staff and closing of the regional offices has thrown the family support plan into chaos; and

Whereas Mike Harris has clearly broken his promise to provide better enforcement of support orders; and

Whereas the government has introduced legislation which will allow the director of family support to refuse to register an order or to close a file and will enable voluntary withdrawal from the family support plan;

Therefore this House calls upon the government to withdraw Bill 82 and guarantee that women and children who are entitled to family support payments promptly receive them and that all court-ordered family support payments be enforced by the province of Ontario. Attorney General.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** First of all, let me acknowledge a number of women and men who are here today from Kitchener-Waterloo, Hamilton, Burlington, Barrie and Toronto who asked that we bring this motion forward today because they are angry at what this government has done to the family support plan. They are angry that women and children across this province are not receiving family support because the government chose to lay off 290 staff and close the regional offices in order that the government could finance its tax scheme for the wealthy. I want to thank them for taking the time to be here with us today.

Let me come directly to the point. The government says that they want this bill, Bill 82, debated. They say they want it in a hurry. Well, the government should answer this: Bill 82 was introduced on October 2. How is it that it has taken the government this long to now bring Bill 82 forward?

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Forty-nine days.

**Mr Hampton:** Forty-nine days. Can the government explain why Bill 79 was more important than this bill? Can the government explain why Bill 81 was more important than the family support plan? Those were the bills that were debated on October 3, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 15.

Can the government explain why Bill 75, dealing with video slot machines, dealing with organized crime's infiltration of video slot machines, can the government tell us why on October 17, 21 and 22, Bill 75 dealing with video slot machines was more important than the family support plan? And again on October 28.

Again, Bill 79 on October 29. And again on October 30, Bill 81 was more important than this bill dealing with the family support plan. Finally, Thursday, October 31, Bill 76, environmental approvals, was more important than the family support plan.

Again on November 4 and again on November 5, video slot machines were deemed more important than the family support plan. November 5, 6, 7 and 18, video slot machines were deemed more important by this government than the family support plan.

On Wednesday, November 20, we in the New Democratic caucus requested unanimous consent to debate Bill 82, the family responsibility bill, and the government turned it down. The government denied unanimous consent to deal with the family support plan and Bill 82, the family responsibility act.

The government needs to come clean. The government needs to answer the question: Why have they delayed bringing Bill 82 into the Legislature for 49 days? Why have they put video slot machines ahead of child support for women and children? Why did the government deny unanimous consent over three weeks ago to debate the family support plan, to debate the family responsibility bill, Bill 82? The government should answer for that.

I also want to come directly to another point. The fact is there are some good things in Bill 82, some things that we pressed for when were the government and we actively worked on, and there are some things that will help. But people better look at some of the other items in Bill 82. The fact of the matter is that if Bill 82 as it now stands is implemented by the government, it will weaken the collection of child support in a number of cases around this province. I want to explain why it will weaken it.

We want good enforcement of child and family support orders, but we are not in favour of legislation that would put women in a position where they could be coerced into opting out, that will put women in a situation where the director of the family support plan can simply close down a file or close down a case. We believe these things are wrong. We believe that those kinds of items which are in Bill 82 will weaken the position of women.

I want to deal with some of the other issues. As I pointed out, we don't think that allowing the director to

refuse to enforce orders, allowing the director to close files, is in the best interests of women. We believe the government should take that out of Bill 82. We believe that putting women in a position where they can be coerced to opt out of the plan is wrong and that it puts women in a very vulnerable position to have that in legislation. We believe it is wrong for the legislation to contain clauses that provide for the implementation of user fees. We don't think the government should be charging user fees of women and children to collect child support and we don't approve of clauses that provide for the privatization of the plan. We don't think private companies should be making money off the backs of women and children who are merely trying to collect their child support.

I want to be very clear with the government: You take back Bill 82 and take out these objectionable pieces of it, these very objectionable parts, and we'll be more than happy to pass Bill 82. We'll be more than happy to call for unanimous consent so the debate can begin and be wrapped up right away. But as long as these objectionable things are in this bill, as long as you put women in a vulnerable position, as long as you're going to collect user fees on the backs of women and children who are trying to collect child support, we're opposed to these measures and we find them very objectionable.

It is very important that people understand exactly what the government has done with the family support plan. Let's just look at some of the history. Prior to 1987-88, in all of those over 40 years of Conservative government, Conservatives never thought it was important for government to help women and children collect child support. When women and children came to Conservative governments and said, "We need help collecting child support," the Conservatives said: "That's not our business. You go collect it yourself."

It wasn't until there was an accord between the New Democrats and the Liberals that something was finally done to help women collect child support. In 1987-88, for the first time, \$19.9 million was collected, and those numbers went up. In 1992-93, as Attorney General I brought in the family support plan program and the family support plan legislative changes. The amount of support collected jumped to \$221.6 million. Something the Conservatives never wanted to we managed to use to collect \$221.6 million for women and children. In 1993-94 it jumped to \$297 million; in 1994-95 it jumped to \$367 million collected for women and children.

The family support plan is not broken. The family support plan was collecting more money for women and children every year. In fact, if you look at the government's own business plan that was filed earlier this year, the government's own business plan noted that Ontario's family support plan was the most cost-effective way to collect child support in Canada. On a per-case basis, more money was being collected than anywhere else and, if you took the cost per case and measured it up with the amount of money that was being collected per case, it was the best plan anywhere.

1530

But this government shut down that plan. It laid off 290 staff, it closed 11 regional offices and it put women



and children across this province into a crisis. We have brought here since August chapter and verse, day in, day out, the history of the chaos that was caused. Women who had received support payments consistently for four and five years suddenly stopped receiving child support cheques in August of this year, in September, in October, and now continuing into November.

It wasn't that the support payor stopped paying. In fact employers like Ontario Hydro, employers like Algoma Steel, employers like Canadian National Railway, were getting notices sent from the family support plan ordering them to deduct more and more money, when they had already deducted the money. The money had been deducted by the employers and had been sent to the no-longer-functioning family support plan and it was sitting there in a government bank account.

Instead of the government transferring that money to the women and children who need it and deserve it, this government was collecting that money in a bank account, was not distributing it, was incapable of distributing it, because they had shut down the plan. The very workers, the very regional offices that distributed that money were shut down, and they were shut down for one reason: so the government could find the money to finance their phoney tax scheme for their wealthy friends.

That's the history of what has gone on here. That is the history. So we have all kinds of cases across this province of women and children who had their power shut off because they weren't receiving their family support plan cheques in August, in September, in October, in November, who had their natural gas shut off, who had their phone disconnected, who were evicted from their apartments, who had to go to a food bank to get food. Why? Because this government shut down the family support plan; they wanted the money to finance their phoney tax scheme. Their phoney tax scheme is more important to them than getting child support cheques to the women and children who are legally entitled to it and who need it. That's why this chaos was created.

A number of people in our caucus want to speak further to this bill, but I lay it on the line again: This government has to answer, why did it take them over 40 days to bring Bill 82 forward? Why was it more important to them to debate video slot machines than to debate child support payments for women and children? Why was it more important for them to debate Bill 81 than to debate and bring forward Bill 82 dealing with family support?

The government has to answer that and the government has to answer why, through this legislation, you are putting women and children in the most vulnerable positions. Why are you putting them in the position where it will be in a support payor's interest to coerce them out of the plan? Why are you putting them in that position? Why do you put in this legislation the provision to collect user fees on the backs of women and children? Why do you put in this legislation provisions to privatize the plan so that corporations can make money off the backs of women and children who are trying to collect child support? That's what you have to answer for.

You take those objectionable items out of this bill and we will be here whenever you want to pass it. We'll give

unanimous consent. But, as it stands, this bill has several objectionable items that will hurt women and children.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Further debate?

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: This is an important debate. That's obvious from the tone of our leader's comments with respect to this motion. There are a number of people who have come to this House today to observe this debate. One of those people is a young man, Arron Moore, who is sitting in the members' gallery right now. He came to Toronto with his mother from Barrie. Both he and she have a strong interest in this debate and in the issue.

**The Acting Speaker:** Could you get to your point of order, please?

**Mr Kormos:** Yes. This young man is a guest of mine in this Legislature. I've signed his pass. He has been denied access to this chamber because he's wearing a T-shirt that is emblazoned with the logo that as a matter of fact says, "Organize, Educate, Resist." You're well aware it's the logo from Days of Protest when people from all walks of life entered the streets of Toronto several weeks ago. He has been asked by security — and I make no criticism of them; these are their instructions — to remove his T-shirt and turn it inside out.

This is a very serious matter. A member of the public is being denied access to this chamber on a very arbitrary and, quite frankly, political basis. I'm calling upon you, Speaker, to direct the security staff to permit this young man into this chamber. He is not here to protest; he is not here to demonstrate; he is not here to engage in any inappropriate behaviour. He's wearing a piece of clothing which is quite normal, quite frankly, on the streets of Toronto or elsewhere in Ontario. I call upon you, Speaker, to direct that my guest to this chamber not be denied access to it as a result of a piece of clothing which in itself is not objectionable in any way, shape or form.

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** Another point of order on the same point.

**The Acting Speaker:** The same point of order. May I remind the members that —

**Ms Lankin:** That's their time then.

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes. I'm not going to stop the clock. This is time-allocated, so go ahead.

**Mr Ruprecht:** But it's important.

**Ms Lankin:** It's on our time. We've got speakers.

**The Acting Speaker:** On your point of order, I know it's general policy in this Legislature that demonstrations aren't allowed. However, I am going to rule that that's subjective, who determines whether a logo on a T-shirt is a demonstration or not. That's an open question, so I'm going to rule that this member be allowed in the Legislature to hear the debate.

Further debate?

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I wish to respond to the presentation of the resolution by the leader of the third party. I must say that after the last question today was made by the former Attorney General, the member for London Centre, who commented that she supported the bill — and yet the resolution now asks that the bill be



withdrawn, although now the leader of the third party is saying, "Well, if you get rid of a couple of sections, we'll permit the bill to be voted on immediately."

I find it very strange, because this is a very unusual motion. I must say in my brief time, which has only been since 1990, I've never heard an opposition party make a resolution like this demanding that a bill be withdrawn. Maybe it has happened, but I don't recall it having happened. It's a very unusual step, particularly with the comments from the member who I believe is also the critic for the third party with respect to Bill 82. However, we will be proceeding to debate it. This, I think, is the fifth day that this time has been spent. We've spent three full days on it. We spent some time yesterday and now this is in effect another day on which we're debating this bill.

I believe that all members of this House will acknowledge that we have a very serious problem that really started on day one. I've stated this before and I'm going to state it again because I don't think I'm getting through to the members of the opposition, and the leader of the third party didn't refer to this. He talked about all the wonderful things he did when he was the Attorney General, but what he didn't say was that there still remain 8,000 pieces of correspondence per day coming into the system that have to be responded to, and 50,000 telephone calls are made per day, of which only 6% are answered. This is under the system that the NDP and the Liberal accord developed. Their universal program increases a case load of 148,000 by 1,400 cases per day, notwithstanding the fact that responsible parents who do not need the program are required to be in the program.

1540

The real problem in this province is that there is \$1 billion in support payment arrears, of which one half is collectible. Only 23% of the cases are in full compliance. I don't know how the members of the third party, and to a certain extent the members of the Liberal Party, can say this system is working. The system is not working and it's never worked from day one: 77% of the cases are not in compliance and in a full 46% of the cases no payments are being made at all.

To say in the resolution that the Premier and the Attorney General promised to improve the family support plan, if you read the bill, if you read the enforcement provisions of this bill, which are going to be tougher than in any other jurisdiction in North America, I don't know how you can stand day after day and then finally, today, say this bill should be withdrawn. I don't know how in all honest conscience you can do that. To say that our government should concentrate its efforts on tracking down deadbeat parents and enforcing payment orders, that's exactly what this bill is going to do.

I stand in amazement at particularly the members of the third party who come here today and ask that this bill be withdrawn when the whole process cries out for a change. The decentralized system they speak of that they seem to be so proud of didn't work. I've listed off all the examples. Talk to anybody who's in the system, who is forced to be in the system, and you'll know in your own heart of hearts it can't work. It can't possibly work when you get 8,000 pieces of correspondence a day, 50,000

telephone calls a day and a machine, 6% of which are answered.

I honestly don't know how they can come here today and demand that the bill be withdrawn. Notwithstanding that I want to remind them, I want to go through some of the sections as to what this bill is going to do, the tough enforcement philosophy the process should have had from day one.

Part V of the bill talks about drivers' licences and motor vehicle permit suspension for defaulting payors. The reporting of cases to credit bureaus, section 47; read that section. The permitting registration of support orders under the Personal Property Security Act; that's section 43. The giving of support order arrears under the Creditors' Relief Act, the providing of better methods to trace and locate defaulting parents, the garnishment of joint bank accounts, the preventing of sheltering of assets, the seizure of lottery winnings of over \$1,000 — I've never heard one word from the members of the third party as to whether they support or reject those positions. They stand up day after day after day saying how the system isn't working. Of course it's not working. That's why we're going to change it.

I'd like to make a few comments with respect to some of the enforcement measures, specifically the driver's licence and motor vehicle permit suspension. Under these sections the director may direct the registrar of motor vehicles to suspend a payor's driver's licence or permit if he or she owes arrears in a support order. Payors are first given 30 days' notice and an opportunity to pay the arrears or enter into a payment arrangement with the director before the driver's licence or vehicle permit is suspended.

We believe this section will bring some sense to those payors who are simply ignoring the court orders. The payor can apply to the court to make an order, preventing the program from suspending the licence if the individual is bearing the order. To limit delay tactics, any order preventing the program from suspending the driver's licence or vehicle permit will only be in effect for six months, with the possibility of an additional three-month extension. Why won't you agree to such a proposal as that? I don't know why you don't.

One more section, the reporting of cases to credit bureaus, section 47. Defaulting payors continue to borrow money for their own purposes despite the fact that they're neglecting to pay child support. Under this section, section 47, the program may report defaulting payors to consumer reporting agencies to ensure that support default is reflected in their credit rating, thereby impeding the ability of defaulters to add to their debt. Reporting of all cases to credit bureaus is one of the new tough enforcement measures that the Family Responsibility Office will administer. This is the second tough enforcement which I cannot understand why members of the third party won't support.

Section 43 talks of the Personal Property Security Act. Defaulting payors continue to borrow money for their own purposes, again despite the fact that they are neglecting child support. These new creditors, if registered under the Personal Property Security Act, have priority over child support arrears. Therefore, this section, section 43,



allows support orders to be registered as security under the Personal Property Security Act. In that way, when an asset is sold, the child support order will be given priority over subsequent registered interests and unregistered interests. This section cries out to be passed today.

Another section is section 66, the amendment to the treatment of the arrears under the Creditors' Relief Act. The existing law as it stands now gives support arrears priority over other judgement creditors for only lump sum support arrears and for one year's worth of periodic support payments. Amendments to the Creditors' Relief Act under this bill will give priority to all support arrears over other judgement debts. This means that when a sheriff takes steps to collect on a support payor's judgement debts, support arrears will be paid first even if there are other judgement debts.

The final item, because there are other members from the government side who wish to make a presentation this afternoon with respect to this resolution, is better tracing and locating of default payors. Currently the family support plan has the authority to gain the address of a payor and the name and address of the employer. There is no ability under the current law to obtain financial information other than what the payor discloses. Without complete financial disclosure related to the payor, enforcement is therefore limited. This bill, section 54 in particular, will provide better methods to trace and locate defaulting parents who cannot be found so that the program can take enforcement action to collect these amounts that are owing to the women and children of this province.

My time has expired, but I urge the members of the opposition, and particularly the members of the third party, to come to their senses and allow this bill to be passed. It cries out for passage.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** I am pleased to rise today to speak once again on the family support bill. It gives us an opportunity to speak about the whole concept of family support in the first place and what a disaster it's been currently, and in particular for the people of Windsor-Sandwich, where I come from.

There are few issues that tug at the heartstrings like those who are negatively impacted by changes that governments make, in particular when the government does it under the guise of doing something that is supposed to be helpful. I can tell you, as many of us who are sitting in this House now know, the changes made by this government in family support have been an absolute disaster for families not just in Windsor-Sandwich but across Ontario, including those represented by Conservative members.

Last week when we spoke to this bill during debate, there were members opposite who said they were not receiving any calls in their offices. We know today that this simply was not the case, that you were simply trying to show that while we may be trying to make political mileage out of this issue, you in fact as Conservative members in this House are not bringing forward information not only to this House but, as well, not bringing it forward to the Attorney General. Because if you honestly feel you have a line to the Attorney General, you should have been on your feet in his office, where you could get

in a lot quicker than I could, and telling them the kinds of problems that families were facing in your ridings. I will tell you that we knew that was happening in your ridings as well. For you to be silent on this issue is completely unacceptable if you are being representative here.

**1550**

There are some members here who have dared to speak out, who have been asked by the press in your ridings and at that point have said, "Indeed we've had some trouble." I'd like to speak to those Conservative members today and say that we really do need your help; the families in Windsor need your help. If you feel you are going to somehow be influential so that you can break the logjam that is happening in the Attorney General's office, we sincerely need your help.

There are families out there who, while Christmas is drawing near, are simply not in a position because they do not have adequate funding — not funding that is some sort of social assistance, which some members here have some trouble with, but money that is clearly and rightly theirs because of a court order. In many cases it is money that is truly theirs that parents who are not the custodial parent are trying to give to their children, and we are not managing to get this money through to them. I came into the House on several occasions with example after example of families like this in my riding.

We have Robert, who works in the mould industry in Windsor, who was in arrears at one time and so a huge amount was being taken off while he was able to catch up. Today, because of the change, because of the closure of the Windsor regional office, he has nowhere to go, nor has our office or our office staff been in a position to get through to make changes so that significant amount is still not coming off of his garnisheed wages. We have a woman named Ruth who is more than \$5,000 in arrears.

I will tell you that in most of the cases with our families who are having trouble with the family support plan, these are not incidences where the families are particularly affluent, where they can afford waiting for thousands of dollars to come through because they've got some kind of nest egg somewhere. Unfortunately, that is not the case with most of the parents who are calling us. I can tell you that the desperation in their voices as we're speaking with them is something that would even galvanize you into action here.

We said last time that we truly believe that if this were being run as a business, the Attorney General for the government of Ontario would have lost his job a long time ago. We would have fired him if we'd had an opportunity to do so. His actions to date have been an absolute disaster.

When the decisions were being made to close the regional offices, I can honestly tell you that the Attorney General was presented with very sufficient documentation to prove that closing the regional offices was simply not going to be helpful, was not going to streamline. If they looked at any areas of the work of the regional offices, they could perhaps have looked at the financial side, where in Windsor, as the example, of 24 staff people, six people work in the area of finance. If they could ever come to an agreement in use and training level of a new



computer system to replace that kind of work, that could have been streamlined. But that certainly was no reason or logic to close the office down entirely. The same case can be made for Thunder Bay, for Hamilton, for Toronto. We certainly cannot understand why even today, after weeks and weeks of harping on case after case, the Attorney General today still has the nerve to stand in this House and say, "We're fixing the problem."

We are incensed. At some point we've got to make new vocabulary, because how many times can we say that we cannot believe he has been allowed to get away with this and to do this to the Ontario family for this long and no measure has come down from the Premier's office to fix this? This is totally unacceptable, something that clearly belongs to families.

We're here today to speak to the opposition motion that's been brought forward. We don't believe — I don't believe — that we can withdraw this bill today. We know that Bill 82 needs to be passed. This is not brain surgery, the items in Bill 82. These are issues that have been dealt with in other jurisdictions across North America for years. We've not all of a sudden unearthed all of this new information to be able to attract these deadbeat parents who aren't paying. We've known this kind of information for some time, and yes, it's about time the Ontario government put their mettle into it and actually brought it forward.

Since you are so passionate about the area of making sure these parents actually pay support, why did it take the Conservative members 49 days from the introduction of the bill to the debate time? And how dare a Conservative member today hold a press conference with parents out there and suggest to these parents of Ontario that the Liberals and the NDP are trying to slow the process of Bill 82. That's exactly what happened today.

**Mr Tilson:** No press conference.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. The member for Dufferin-Peel, come to order.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Let me tell you that is a joke and it's a joke that member has perpetrated on those families, because it's about time we told the truth in this House. This government took 49 days from the introduction of the bill to the time it has been debated in these last couple of weeks in this House and the government has the mantle here. They are the ones who could have chosen.

I'll tell you what the Ontario government has done: This government has decided to play the typical political game, to wait until you needed to score points with the media and score points with the public to show how compassionate you are for families. Not only that, you also waited until there was such a complete crisis in the family support plan that you absolutely had to float Bill 82, which you'd been sitting on for 49 days. Let me tell you, that meant for us 49 more days of more families with more screwed-up problems concerning their money than we've ever had in the history of Ontario.

No one is going to argue with us. I would even perhaps caution to say that had the NDP still been there, they too might have realized they had significant problems they had to address with this system. Surely they knew it. That's why they were addressing the issue, just

as the Liberals had done. Not one member in this House would suggest that the family support plan was perfect and that it couldn't be improved. Not only that, but the number of parents who weren't being affected yet in a positive way, we all needed to address it.

To suggest today, as has happened with our member for Brampton North, who decides to be the champion here — I might suggest too that if you were going to send forward an MPP to participate in this kind of a function this morning, you really could have suggested another member because that MPP, of all members of this House, who lately has had his 15 minutes of fame for making the most outrageous and outlandish statements in this House that are completely anti-women, completely anti-children, but no, he's going to go out today as though he's been totally supportive of the family support plan and the changes you're bringing in. It is ludicrous to suggest this.

All we want the people out there to know is that this Tory government took 49 days from the introduction of the bill to the debate of the bill.

**Mr Tilson:** And you're still talking.

**Mrs Pupatello:** And I am still talking. As long as the people in Windsor-Sandwich have not had this corrected, I am going to keep talking and you won't hear me silenced on this issue. If you think you're going to politicize an opposition day, which is one of the few chances that opposition parties have to lay it on the line with the Tories, that's going to be your problem because we'll continue to do so.

I might also want to say that had this whole issue been such a big one and such a big concern for the Conservatives who are now in government, why did you introduce the bill when you did? Why was that not introduced at the same time as, say, Bill 7? You guys were writing Bill 7 while Harris was on his little campaign bus. Before the vote day on June 8, 1995, you had that bill written.

Was family support such a burning issue for Tories that you had to wait several months — nay, a year — to even think about writing Bill 82? And now to suggest that only the Tories are championing the cause of families is absolutely ludicrous. The people will begin to see, because in my view, the bloom is off the rose. What is becoming more than a little apparent is that the single-mindedness of government today in Ontario is looking for money because you need to finance a tax cut.

This becomes more and more clear as we get more data that support what we are saying. The bond rating service issued a press release yesterday and it was quite interesting. In fact, what they said about your tax cut — let's face it, you ran on a tax cut, so you're going to have to support the tax cut now and you're going to have to be positive about it. Not only now but even when the bond rating service sends out their press release, you're going to have to support this.

I want you to stand up in the House today, Minister, and support why they would have issued a challenge that says the 30% personal income tax cut is the single largest challenge to the balanced budget objective. The bond rating service estimates that 88% of increases in tax revenue resulting from economic growth over the next three years will be required to finance the tax cut reduction.



This just came out yesterday, so now we're going to start doing some research to find out when in the history of Ontario we had this kind of growth rate that's going to allow you the 88% that you're going to need, because the fact of the matter is you're going to borrow to finance the tax cut. You'll borrow it.

1600

I think I should probably send all of you copies of the press release because some of you would be more than a little interested to read that your friends or acquaintances really aren't in sync with you on this tax cut. They really seem to be coming along here.

The deficit at just over 2% of GDP is still high for this stage of the economic cycle. Let me say this again. The deficit at just over 2% of GDP is still high for this stage of the economic cycle. In addition, it estimates the proposed 30% personal income tax cut will absorb approximately 88% of the tax revenue generated by the economy over the next three years. I think we have some cause for worry here.

If we go back to what really drives the government in what they're doing, we need to ask the government to take special consideration, be especially clear that when you're making policy decisions like the ones you made not that long ago to close regional offices in Ontario, it was simply foolhardy when you knew there was a problem with family support. When you knew the finger had a cut, you wanted to fix it by cutting off the arm. That's exactly what you did where family support was concerned.

You had documentation, our Attorney General had documentation that proved the Windsor office was far and away one of the best offices and highly efficiently run offices in the Ontario government. The staff people I've come to know were highly qualified. We paid to train them and they're gone. Not only have we lost jobs in Windsor as a result, but we have another brain drain because we had the cost assumed to train them and give them that experience so that they could help citizens in Ontario, and now they're gone. What you got instead was a bunch of temporary help, clerk positions, in Toronto that cannot answer the telephones, and when you get them on the phone, they don't give you the answers.

Last week when I spoke in this House, an interesting thing happened. I got calls from as far away as Wawa. I always like hearing from the people of Wawa. People were very curious to hear that the debt situation in Ontario is pretty dismal, thanks to the Tories. We now have proof you have the worst GDP-to-debt ratio in the history of the Ontario government. For all of your cuts, for the very little economic development that you've been able to create, you are now at about 34% in your debt-to-GDP ratio. It's absolutely the worst in the history of the Ontario government and people found that interesting. So of course we faxed our research all over Ontario to everyone who called and asked for it. Any of the members of the Conservative Party, I would welcome; please call and we'll send you the data as well.

We also got calls that said: "You know, here's a phone number you might want to use. You actually get a live person." So for all the members who don't want to identify themselves, I did want to give you the number.

It's area code 416, and the number is 359-3929. So, Speaker, if you don't mind, this phone number is critical to many people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** I do mind.

**Mrs Pupatello:** You do mind. I'll put that down. It'll be in Hansard.

**Mr Kormos:** What's that number again?

**Mrs Pupatello:** That number was 416-359-3929. That at least will give you a real voice to talk to. They will not have all the information you need, but at least you have a voice.

We also have two fax numbers. Mr Speaker, may I hold this fax number up, or the second number on this list?

**Mr Kormos:** I can't see that.

**The Acting Speaker:** No, you may not.

**Mrs Pupatello:** No. I'll put that down. The fax numbers are, to the member from Welland, 416-359-3947 or 416-359-3949. I'd encourage constituency staff, Queen's Park staff who have been having an awful lot of trouble getting through to the Attorney General, to explain to constituents that we have to say we are trying. We have faxed our lists of problem cases and we've been asked to somehow prioritize the worst cases. In my view they're all worst cases. How you'd ever choose which of the worst is better is impossible. We've been asked to fax them again. We simply are not getting through to the Attorney General.

We've decided to try to plead to the Premier that if the Premier has any sympathy for parents and families out there in Ontario, he'll just turn around to that Attorney General and say, "Get your act together." If I were the employer and the Attorney General were my employee, I would have fired him long ago because this is an absolute disaster.

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** You've said that before.

**Mrs Pupatello:** I did say that before and I'll keep saying that because this is absolutely critical. I have never seen such a botched-up system in my life, which may not be saying much. Perhaps you've seen worse, but the way this is affecting families is terrible because it was completely avoidable.

Our member for Hamilton, Dominic Agostino, stood in the House and presented a document that the cabinet members got. Those cabinet members knew the result of closing the regional office before your computer system was up and running, before you had your second system in place. You cabinet ministers knew; you were told you were going to have absolute chaos, and the result was that you planned to do nothing. You planned to have a completely chaotic system here. Perhaps you planned at that time too to wait until the crisis reached a sufficient level and at that point you would introduce Bill 82.

If those whiz kids are this bright, you know what? I give them kudos too because it was a brilliant marketing strategy to actually wait to implement this closure, total chaos, introduction of Bill 82 to get the good-news hit. Wait 49 more days to begin debate so that the chaos gets even worse, so that you have the nerve to send your Conservative member out there as though we are somehow trying to obstruct the debate on this or pass some



very good things that family support needs. This has all been about a marketing strategy of the government, and it's only because of one thing: You're looking for money and you will cut it anywhere. Regardless of how illogical the cut is, you will cut anywhere.

I hope we have a full debate on this. I say to parents out there who are under some misguided information that we would be obstructionists on this: That is simply not the case. We have the right to debate every bill that comes into this House. In this case, when we debate this issue we get the opportunity to say that this government has been an abysmal failure for families in Ontario and we need to have this corrected.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I am pleased to participate in the debate today because it allows me to put on the record again, to reinforce, how this Attorney General has caused a crisis at the family support plan beginning in August this year. It allows me again to reinforce the very serious concerns we have with provisions of Bill 82 which in the long run will be far more detrimental to women and children who are trying to receive arrears than anything any other government could have done.

Let me begin with the crisis at the family support plan. I have a really hard time hearing and accepting that this Conservative government is somehow genuinely concerned about the plight of women and children across this province when the Attorney General made a conscious decision to finance his portion of the tax cut off the backs of women and children who are involved in the family support plan. I have a hard time accepting that you're very genuine about your concern today when you allowed him to do that kind of thing.

The fact of the matter is that this Attorney General decided he was going to take 35% out of the operating budget of the family support plan over two years — that was his decision — to provide his contribution for your phoney tax cut. The result of that: 290 experienced family support plan staff laid off in a single day. The result was that eight regional offices were closed by the Attorney General. There was no transition in place.

The new centralized office that's supposed to be so much more efficient and effective doesn't exist. We exposed that, my colleague from Welland-Thorold and I, some three weeks ago when we went to Downsview. There are computers piled all over, faxes piled all over, phones not plugged in, computers not plugged in. There's no one working at that office.

1610

Your Attorney General had the audacity to close the eight regional offices before that new office was even up and running. He also laid off that staff with no provision in place whatsoever to hire new staff, to get people trained so that people wouldn't lose their service in the supposed transition. He did that, I remind every member in this House, against the very specific advice of all his staff, from the front line right up to his senior management staff, who said to him, "If you move in this way, if you close those offices and lay off 290 staff, you will have thousands of women and children put at risk of financial hardship because there will be no service delivery, no way to get cheques out to those people." He did it anyway, against all that advice.

I ask you, as members of the Conservative Party, to think about a man who would deliberately, consciously put at risk thousands and thousands of families right across this province that were receiving regular support payments just so he could make his contribution to the tax cut. That's how much he cares about women and children who are owed support in the province of Ontario. The government had better recognize that.

I heard the Minister of Economic Development and Trade say in this House yesterday that the government is operating like a business. No business in this province would shut down its regional offices before its new centralized office was up and running. No business would lay off the overwhelming majority of its staff and not have any personnel to replace and deliver services. No business would put its clients at risk in the way this Attorney General has.

The clients here are human beings. They are predominantly women and children who are now suffering financial hardship directly as a result of a conscious and deliberate decision that he made. Shame on all of you and shame on him for financing the tax cut on the backs of women and children in this province, because that's what he's done, and all of you should recognize that.

Let me tell you about my concerns with this bill: the very ones the member for Dufferin-Peel conveniently neglected to mention in his speech in this House a few moments ago. The very concerns we have in this caucus that we believe will result in long-term harm for women and children trying to get arrears are the very ones that he conveniently forgot to mention. They are very serious concerns. Let me name two of them.

I am very concerned about provision that would allow families to opt out of the plan, because there is no doubt in my mind that any number of payors would use coercive methods to try and force recipients out of the plan, or, if they got them out of the plan, to then use any means to get access issues and other issues resolved by saying, "I'm not going to give you your money." There will be no way to ensure that those families get their money if they have opted out of the plan. There are no provisions whatsoever in this piece of legislation to stop coercion on behalf of payors, none whatsoever.

I am also appalled that the minister would think it's appropriate that when and if people want to come back into the plan, they will be charged a fee for that. No woman, no recipient, no payor should be charged user fees under this plan. This money is legally owed to families. The Attorney General has no business saying there will be any kind of user fee in this plan. He certainly has no business planning to turn this over to the private sector so that his friends in the corporate sector can make money off the backs of women and children who are legally owed support payments in this province. That is unacceptable. It is unacceptable that the minister would allow any kind of user fees, any kind of fee, any kind of payment for people who are trying to get money they are legally entitled to receive.

I want to say to the member here, and it's too bad he's left the chamber, if he wanted to bring in a bill today and proceed on the very provisions he named when he spoke today, we in this party would move unanimous consent



and vote on that today, because the provisions he outlined are ones which we support, are ones which are necessary. But it's those very concerns I mentioned in the House just a moment ago, the concerns about opting out and no method to deal with coercion, the concerns about fees and the concern about allowing the director to write off arrears — which are not acceptable to members of this party.

Let me deal with the arrears, because this government has promised thousands of women and across this province that when this bill is passed they are suddenly going to see some of those arrears collected. Those women and children should be reminded that this bill says very clearly that the director of the plan will have the ability, will have the discretion to write off millions and millions of dollars of arrears by closing any file that he or she wishes to close because he or she deems that those files are not enforceable.

The Attorney General in this House has already said that some \$450 million of arrears are unenforceable. There is no doubt in my mind that if this bill passes without a change to that section, without it being taken out completely, two years from now the Attorney General will stand in his place and will try to say that the plan is working because now \$450 million of arrears doesn't show. And that \$450 million of arrears will be money that was owed to women and children that should have gone out to families across the province that will be wiped off the books because it will be too expensive for the government or some private collection agency to collect it.

That is not acceptable to members in this party. It should not be acceptable to thousands of women and children out there who are getting false promises from this government that somehow they're going to get their arrears. They will not if that portion of this bill passes.

There's one final comment I want to make in the time I have remaining, and that's with respect to this bill. I remind all members in this House again that for 42 years under previous Tory governments, for 42 years, the issue of family support was not a high priority for Conservative governments. Not one Conservative government under 42 years of rule thought enough about it as a public policy issue, thought that government should be involved in ensuring that women and children got support payments.

Don't tell me how concerned you are about this issue now. This bill was introduced on October 2. For 49 days, this government didn't call this bill. Video lottery terminals and other bills were more important. On November 7, when our party asked for unanimous consent in this House to debate Bill 82, the Attorney General sat in his place and members of this Conservative government voted that down. That's how much you cared to deal with this bill.

May I say one thing in closing? You should be telling everyone clearly that even if this bill was to pass tomorrow, because of the incompetence, because of the bungling of this Attorney General, there's not even an office where you could open up business at this point in time.

We heard this week in this House that the request for proposals for new technology for the new office just went out two weeks ago. It's not even in place. Downsview is

a catastrophe right now. You have new staff who are not trained, who we've been told won't even be starting to answer the phone until January. That's the mess we've been left with because this Attorney General thought it was far more important to finance his tax cut on the backs of women and children than to ensure that people who used to get regular payments would continue to receive them.

1620

**Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot):** I'd like to respond to the member for Sudbury East and the member for Windsor-Sandwich. They're obviously living in a dream world if they believe that the regional office structure of the old family support plan that they operated was providing regular payments to women and children. The old plan that the former Liberal government put in place and that the former NDP government perpetuated was ineffective. It caused hardship and suffering for women and children in this province.

If the regionally based family support plan that your government operated was so great, why, when this government assumed office, were only a quarter of family support plan cases in full compliance? Why, when we took over the plan, were only one in four plan recipients receiving regular payments?

If the regionally based family support plan that your government operated was so great, why, when our government assumed office, was there close to \$1 billion in support payment arrears? Today, based on the criteria used by those in the debt collection business, only about half of that money is considered to be collectible. Why? Because for some of those cases in arrears, the trail is cold. Why is it cold? Because the old family support plan was ineffective in acting swiftly, decisively, proactively on behalf of the women and children in this province who were at risk due to the huge amount of money owing to them.

If the regionally based support plan that your government operated was so great, why, when our government assumed office, was money not flowing regularly to the recipients in nearly 50% of the plan's cases?

If the regionally based family support plan that your government operated was so great, why, when our government assumed office, were only about 6% of the 50,000 calls a day to the plan getting through? Why? There were only 18 family support plan staff answering telephone calls for the entire province.

If the regionally based support plan that your government operated was so great, why, when our government assumed office, was the plan getting 8,000 pieces of mail each and every day, many of them complaint letters from clients who were not able to get through on the phone lines, many of them complaint letters from plan recipients who were not receiving their money?

If the regionally based family support plan that the NDP government operated was so great, why didn't you do anything to deal with the growing caseload? Three years ago the family support plan caseload was 97,000, but you did nothing. When we assumed office in June 1995, there were 138,000 cases. There are currently 150,000 cases, an increase of 40% over the past three years. The caseload is growing at an average rate of over



1,400 cases per month. You didn't change the plan to keep pace with the caseload. The regionally based support plan that the former Liberal and NDP governments operated was inadequate to keep up with the needs of the children and women in this province who depend on it for their money.

Why, when we formed the government, were 75% of plan recipients not receiving any money? Why was money not flowing on a regular basis in nearly 50% of the plan cases? Why was there nearly \$1 billion in support payment arrears? Why, on any given day, was no one answering the phone for 95% of the callers to the plan? Who was home? Where were you when all this was going on?

The Liberal and NDP governments did not put tough enforcement measures in place. The Liberal and NDP governments did not invest in technology. The Liberal and NDP governments did not give their family support plan staff the training and tools to act swiftly and decisively on behalf of the women and children in this province. When you formed the government you had an opportunity to make this plan work and you did not do it. You failed. You did not invest in technology. You did not give the family support plan staff the training and tools they needed to do their job effectively, and you didn't toughen the enforcement measures. You obviously had other priorities.

Getting support payment money to the women and children of this province is a priority for this government. We are making the changes that will make this plan work. Why? Because the plan you put in place is broken and it is a disservice to the children and women of this province who depend on it. It does not provide children and women with the money they deserve and are rightfully entitled to receive.

We are establishing a new Family Responsibility Office that will truly be effective for the women and children of this province. We are investing in technology. We are giving the Family Responsibility Office the skills, the tools and the authority they need to do the job. We are streamlining services so that a case has to only travel through a maximum of three staff instead of the previous 13. We are toughening the enforcement measures under the new Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act of Ontario, and in Ontario we'll have the toughest, most stringent support enforcement measures in North America.

The members opposite had the time; they had the mandate. They did not do it. They obviously had other priorities. This government's priority is ensuring that children and women get the money to which they are entitled, and we are doing it through the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act.

It is inaccurate and misleading for the opposition parties and members to suggest that moving the support plan operations from eight regional locations to a consolidated location in Downsview has eliminated the community-based services. Let's be very clear here.

First, the walk-in, over-the-counter access to the family support plan that the previous governments operated was only available in eight communities. The old structure discriminated against clients who did not live in one of

those eight communities. It was inequitable. Unless a client lived in one of those urban centres where there was a regional office, they did not have access to over-the-counter services unless they travelled to a distant regional office. It is unconscionable to expect family support plan clients, most of whom are single parents, to take the time to travel the distance to a regional office in another community.

Second, on any given day only about 60 people visited a regional office — fewer than 500 people a day. That's a third of 1% of the plan's clients. Why did they go to the regional office? Most because they either couldn't get through on the telephone or no one responded to any correspondence. In fact, many clients said they preferred to contact the plan by phone, yet under the plan that the opposition parties operated when they formed the government, fewer than 6% of the 50,000 calls a day got through.

Third, the regional office structure used an old-fashioned work process. Central inquiring agents had to refer issues to the regional office, causing numerous delays and obvious frustration for the clients. The regional offices were intended to deal with enforcement issues, but because of the antiquated work process in place by the previous government, most staff in the regional offices spent all their time hand-sorting cheques, which is pretty amazing in this world of electronic banking. A case might have to travel through as many as 13 employees to be resolved. This would further delay prompt payment to the women and children of Ontario.

Under our new program, we will have a multiservice, trained staff who will be able to resolve cases directly and immediately. For example, a case will travel through a maximum of three people: an intake officer, a client services associate and a financial officer, equalling a solution.

The plan that our government is putting in place will make it possible for any family support plan client anywhere in Ontario to have access to that plan. The government is in the process of providing one-stop service with trained, multiskilled staff; doubling the number of front-line staff from 40 to 97; enhancing a 1-800 telephone service to provide greater public access; creating a call response centre with the capacity to handle thousands of calls per day, investing almost \$1 million in technology to improve customer service; and having local solicitors providing legal services delivery.

The transition to a new and truly effective support enforcement program is proceeding in an orderly manner. There have been problems with the support plan for many years, going back to 1987, when the former Liberal government set up the support order enforcement program. Since then, the family support plan has steadily degenerated under the weight of a bureaucratic and inefficient service delivery.

In June 1995, our government inherited a family support plan that was most truly in chaos. The plan was broken. The plan was neglected. It never provided the majority of women and children in this province with the money to which they were entitled. Under the old plan, support payors owed nearly \$1 billion in arrears to women and children in this province. Three out of four



recipients were not receiving the full amount of support to the plan to which they were entitled. In more than half of the cases registered, money does not flow regularly.

1630

There was limited phone access. There were nearly 50,000 calls a day; only 6% were answered. Clients could not reach the staff responsible for their file. Eight thousand pieces of mail arrived every day. There was a huge and growing caseload. That condition may have been acceptable to the previous government, but it is unacceptable to me personally and it's unacceptable to this government.

That's why we are overhauling the program to crack down on defaulting parents and to ensure that families get the support to which they're entitled and which they rightfully deserve. We are putting in place a plan that would eliminate the chaos of the old plan that we inherited.

Although the support enforcement program is in transition to a new and improved service, it is already producing results. Our government is processing cheques faster than a year ago. It now takes 24 to 36 hours to process a cheque and to have the money in the hands of the families. It used to take an entire week. This month, in a single week, this government disbursed \$12 million to women and children in this province.

During the transition, more than 95% of the individual concerns that have been brought to the attention of the ministry have been resolved. Where there is a special problem, a unique problem, this government is acting immediately to deal with it.

There have always been delays in the family support plan process. That's because it was not set up properly in the first place by the previous governments. The old plan that the opposition parties operated relied heavily on the postal service. The new Family Responsibility Office will rely less on the postal service and more on the use of electronic deposits. This will eliminate the need for the family support plan program to be in the middle, receiving payments and then making payments to recipients.

During the transition, the family support plan is continuing to operate at four locations: head office, our financial institution, Downsview and the Toronto regional office. The Downsview office is scheduled to open the week of December 9 of this year. The ministry's Toronto regional office will continue to operate until Downsview is fully operational in January. In the interim, the ministry has staff working evenings and weekends to ensure that payments are processed promptly. Already the ministry has doubled the number of employees who have front-line skills and tripled the number of staff responding to telephone calls. We are already seeing results. A cheque can now be processed within 24 to 36 hours.

Obviously this government is taking the necessary steps to ensure that the women and children of this province receive the financial support that's due them from their spouses.

The last and not least of my comments with respect to this matter is that the government is concentrating its efforts on tracking down the deadbeat parents and enforcing support orders. The Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act will do just that. The

new act contains some of the toughest support payment enforcement measures in North America.

These tough measures include suspending the drivers' licences of defaulting payors; reporting defaulting payors to credit bureaus; giving the new responsibility office the power to register support orders as security interests under the Personal Property Security Act; amending the Creditors' Relief Act to give priority to all support arrears over other judgement creditors; giving the Family Responsibility Office the authority to ask the court to order the production of financial statements and make orders against third parties who shelter the assets and income of defaulting payors to help them avoid support orders; again, closing the loophole that allowed support payors to shelter funds in joint bank accounts with other parties so that the Family Responsibility Office will have the authority to garnish 50% of that money in a joint bank account.

There is also the seizure of lottery winnings over \$1,000; expanding the definition of "income" to enable the Family Responsibility Office to be much more effective in obtaining the money that is owed to children and women in this province by those who are intermittently employed or who have non-standard employment arrangements; giving the Family Responsibility Office greater power to trace and locate defaulting parents and to obtain the information about payors' assets and incomes; and screening all potential provincial government appointments to make sure our government does not appoint people who do not pay their support.

The government of Mike Harris is keeping its promise to crack down on defaulting payors.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I'm very pleased to join the debate today on the opposition motion related to the family support plan. Certainly, just in quick response to the members for Kitchener-Wilmot and Dufferin-Peel, one wonders just what planet they're on.

There are two things that the people of this province will not forget in relation to the family support plan and the whole process. One is a government that chose to essentially close down the entire process in August when it closed the regional offices and laid off 290 people and left thousands of women and children in the province and certainly hundreds from my constituency absolutely desperate to make contact with a plan and a process that previously had not been a problem for the vast majority of them.

The fact is that before the regional offices were closed down, my constituency office in the first year that I was in office received very, very few phone calls at all in terms of problems with the family support office. Since that time we've had nothing but an incredible number constantly coming through. It's simply astonishing that the members could stand up here and act as if there is no problem at all, never was a problem and everything is working out hunky-dory now when indeed it's simply not the case.

A government that can stand here and accuse the opposition members of being obstructionist is astonishing and makes one quite frankly not find the words to express it, because here's a government that basically introduces a bill, finally after a great long wait, and then



waits 49 days to bring it to debate, to second reading. It's impossible to accept that they are truly serious about the situation. The Attorney General himself has simply not accepted the fact that this has remarkably and frighteningly affected thousands and thousands of women and children.

Many constituents in my riding are still dealing with the unbelievable stress, the hardship, the humiliation and the deprivations they've been forced to endure as a result of this government's refusal: the refusal to listen to reasonable arguments as to why regional offices should stay open, the refusal to listen to suggestions for operational improvements put forward by the family support plan personnel themselves, the refusal to listen to the warnings of what disasters could occur if such a move took place, the refusal to listen to positive suggestions for a smooth transition period and the refusal to listen to some solutions to the current problems occurring.

Allow me to say that I take my responsibility as a member of this Legislature very, very seriously. May I also say that I work hard at being constructive in my role as an opposition member. I don't feel it's sufficient to merely oppose. I feel a duty to offer concrete alternatives whenever appropriate, and this I have done in relation to the family support plan.

I'm supportive of cost-efficiency measures which don't extract too high a human price. As well, as an MPP, regardless of my party's stripe, I believe it's an MPP's responsibility to bring the message of the people to the government, as well as vice versa. This I also feel I have done. But in matters of family support, to what avail? I ask the Attorney General, to what avail?

If I may, allow me to take the Attorney General on a trip down memory lane. Some eight months ago — really, early in January — I stood up in this House and told the minister that the people of northwestern Ontario were opposed to the closure of the regional offices. I provided solid reasons for keeping them open and I warned him, absolutely warned him well in advance, of the inefficiencies which could occur.

1640

Let me quote from Hansard, April 2, 1996, on a petition that I brought forward at that time: "Whereas the Thunder Bay branch region covers from White River to the Ontario-Manitoba border; regional staff has established excellent experience and contacts for tracing and locating delinquent support payors in the northwest due to their familiarity with the region;

"Whereas seasonal employment and variable support provisions are common to the northwest; consistent monitoring of these cases is essential to the proper enforcement of support orders agreements; delays on acting on these adjustments would result in increased enrolment for social assistance and increased court actions against FSP within an overworked court system;

"Whereas it is proposed that cases will not be assigned to a particular case worker; this will result in non-efficient, repetitive and time-consuming work as each time a file is actioned the file will have to be fully reviewed as the provisions of each court order are unique; difficulties will occur when staff interpret the support provisions differently and it is proposed staff will only act

upon issue-driven cases, so not all cases in arrears will be reviewed...;

"Therefore, we hereby respectfully request that you give consideration to our concerns and reject any proposal for the closure of the Thunder Bay branch family support plan."

I concurred at that time and continually tried to make that point.

I made reference that day to compliance problems, but I never imagined that it would be the government that would be the party not complying with timely payments. Never did I imagine that it was the government that would be in arrears to certainly the hundreds of custodial parents in my riding. Never did I expect that the government of this day would become the delinquent, but it has; it absolutely has. Certainly the Attorney General must shoulder the blame.

I made reference also to the non-efficiencies of a client not being assigned to a particular case worker. What about the non-efficiency of not being able to speak to any case worker, any human being, period? Well, that's what's happening, and it's been happening since they closed down the regional offices.

I warned also about children suffering, but never in my worst nightmare could I have imagined that because of the inability of the government to comply in a timely fashion with the processing of many of the payments made in good faith by the payor to the FSP for the needs of the custodial parent and children, children would suffer to the extent that they have. This government needs to acknowledge that and recognize that, and they need give no lessons over here.

The complaints brought to this House of the suffering caused the children and custodial parents, usually moms, have been legion. We have people who have lost their homes, people whose heat or utilities or phones have been cut off, mothers who can't buy school clothes or winter clothing or boots for their children, moms who can no longer drive because they can't pay their insurance. We have dads who are going hungry or doing without because even though a full deduction for family support was deducted from their wages, thanks to the bungling and the inefficiencies of the new family support plan operation, those moneys never got sent by the FSP to the moms and kids, so dad is trying to give extra directly to the family so they will not have an empty food cupboard or have to sit in the cold dark because there was no money for the utility bill. This is just simply absurd and absolutely unacceptable.

I referred at the time also to the increased enrolment in social assistance that could occur and, as you well know, this has happened. But again I point out, never did I think it would happen as a result of horrendous mismanagement by the government of funds that had been submitted to the plan by payor parents for the custodial parents.

I rose in the House the day following those warnings to add more than 1,000 additional names on petitions opposing the Toronto centralization of the family support plan operation.

Eight months ago I also rose in this House to ask the Attorney General two very significant questions and to urge him — implore him — to work with the family



support staff in Thunder Bay, who had developed a 19-point streamlining plan to create positive solutions to eliminate administration costs but to ensure that essential personal service could be maintained in northwestern Ontario. The minister never showed any interest in this 19-point plan at all.

What I said at the time was: "...this government has taken no pains to disguise its interest in dismantling and/or centralizing this program meant to bring child support dollars to custodial parents. But like the staff of the Thunder Bay family support plan branch, which covers the terrain from White River to the Manitoba border, I question how this government intends to realize greater compliance in terms of arrears of hundreds of millions of dollars owed to the children of this province by choosing, without any consultation, to shut down an existing system without first working with the experienced staff of those offices to devise a better system to ensure significantly improved compliance, compliance that can only happen with regional staff in place.

"How can a centralized Toronto version of the family support plan be successful in northwestern Ontario, for example, when the reduced staff will be located 1,500 kilometres away from their caseload and where voice mail and a 1-800 number will be the order of the day? I certainly don't see how, nor do the 2,500 constituents who've signed petitions in my riding.

"I urge the Attorney General to work with the staff of the family support plan in Thunder Bay, to hear them out on their 19-point streamlining plan that would eliminate administration costs but ensure that vital, front-line service is maintained in northwestern Ontario."

The Attorney General had no interest in listening to the thoughts of his own staff and they were plans that would have saved a remarkable amount of money — never listened to.

I continued throughout the spring to present the opposition of myself and the people of northwestern Ontario to this dismantling, this centralization and yet, come August, what greeted us but the closure of the regional offices. We all know, and those of us who are in tune with our constituents will admit, the accompanying predictable disastrous results. We knew this would happen. The phone lines in our constituency offices across the province have become jammed.

The questions are: "Where's my FSP money? My child support cheque is late. It's never been late. My ex's company sent in the money. My rent is due. I'm out of groceries. I have to shop for the kids' school clothes. I can't get any answer to my phone calls. I went to the office and it's closed." Whether you were in Port Credit or Port Arthur, North Bay or Thunder Bay, I am sure the queries, the complaints, the cries were all the same.

In August I had the opportunity to speak with the Attorney General and I told him what was happening. He told me he knew and that his staff were working to get things sorted out. Well, as you know, things simply worsened. In September I met personally with the Attorney General in his office to outline for him in detail exactly what the problems were, the real difficulties that families were encountering and the suggestions that we had for solving the problem.

Things continued to worsen. The irritation of custodial parents has elevated to anger, the worry has escalated to fear, the anxiety has given way to downright panic, as the cupboards have become bare, where rent and utilities and other bills have become seriously overdue. These are things that simply are facts. The Attorney General knows it, the member for Kitchener-Wilmot knows it, the member for Dufferin-Peel knows it.

Things continued to worsen. Constituents and staff spent hours on the phone. You know the old sort of infamous "1-800-nobody's-home" line? Well, that's the way it was: just no results, no response. My assistants faxed all kinds of cases and materials to the minister's office and again, no response, tremendous delays.

Never in my darkest moments did I ever expect that, as a direct result of this government's stubborn refusal to take advice and do the right thing and its subsequent horrific bungling of this operation, my staff would have to hand out on almost a daily basis food bank and used clothing depot information. This should not be happening. The money was being sent in; it wasn't being sent back to the custodial parents.

Never did I expect that we would have to write letters of explanation for a constituent's inability to pay landlords or creditors because of the family support plan delayed payment. Never did I expect that we would have to hear tales of hunger and cold and embarrassment and fear as a result of the family support plan mismanagement.

This government has put an incredible number of children and parents of this province at risk. One young mother reported how she had received — and this is a terrible story — a severe beating from her abusive ex-husband because being without a family support payment for two consecutive months, she had called his employer to confirm that the company had indeed forwarded the court-ordered paycheque deduction to FSP. For making this call, she incurred the wrath of her ex-husband, who chose to punish her with his fists. That is a horrendous story and should not have happened.

1650

On the other end of the scale, we've had custodial parents who have actually united with their former spouses, the payors, for the purpose of coming to my office together to beg for the wellbeing of their children. I speak of cases where substantial court-ordered deductions have been made at the workplace of the payor, family support has cashed the employer's cheques and no payment has been sent to the custodial parent.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** All too common.

**Mr Gravelle:** That's right: all too common. It's absolutely frightening. The custodial parent, who is usually the mom, has received no family support cheque, even though the payor has made the payment. Dad has no extra money to tide over the family; he has already had the substantial deduction off his paycheque, and still the mother and children have no money, end of story.

We're usually not talking about — this is an important point too — discretionary income. Family support payments generally represent an extremely important contribution to the essentials of life for the custodial



parent and children. That money goes towards shelter costs, food, essential clothing, prescription drugs.

Most families in Ontario today probably live in a paycheque-to-paycheque fashion without much opportunity to build up any substantial, readily available contingency or emergency fund. When you remove the paycheque unexpectedly or send it one or two or three months late or send only part of it with no explanation regarding the missing portion, what results? Inconvenience and annoyance perhaps for a few, but disaster, chaos, hardship and panic for the majority, and it's absolutely not necessary.

This, Mr Speaker, is the fallout with which we're attempting to deal on a daily basis, and I'm sure you are as well. I have to ask the Attorney General, what happens here? Where does the money go? What systems are in place to ensure this doesn't continue to happen? Why can't the problem be solved? Well, the reasons are pretty clear as well. By closing down the regional offices, by setting up a centralized phantom office in Toronto which is not up and running, it's clear that the minister has more than bungled; he has done an extraordinary disservice to the people of the province of Ontario.

I've got to ask, what about the phantom phone line? People literally exhaust themselves calling those magic numbers to get nothing but a recording. On those rare — and I certainly emphasize rare — occasions that a human being is actually reached on the line, the individual on the FSP line, generally speaking, knows nothing about the case and says someone will get back to the caller. And guess what? Surprise, surprise. Weeks later there is still no response.

All the members in the House know this. It's absolutely incredible. Certainly all the members on the government side — and the member for Kitchener-Wilmot and the member for Dufferin-Peel spoke earlier — are experiencing the same situation.

As a member of the House, obviously we try to deal with this in the best fashion we can. We assign special members of our staff to deal with and work on this case. The minister himself, the Attorney General, literally assigns his own staff to deal with MPP inquiries. So we figure, okay, we'll phone and we'll fax. We've got a direct link. But the trouble is, we phone and we fax and we fax and we fax and we fax again, and still, even with this so-called special staff being put on by the Attorney General, still no response to the majority of our inquiries.

We check back with our complainants to see if they've heard anything. In most instances, it's been the same thing: no response. Some do report having received some money when we continue to press, and occasionally we're successful, but what happens is that it seems to come in peculiar amounts that have no resemblance to the court ordered payments but are invariably smaller rather than larger.

As soon as we have a case that finally seems to be solved, it's quickly replaced by a new case coming into or calling our office. It's akin to pouring water into a cup with a gaping hole. It just never stops. In other instances, we have cases where court ordered payments reached completion months ago and should have been stopped, yet moneys keep being deducted from the payor. Again there is no one for these people to communicate with.

We have reports of huge sums of money sent in by employers being lost, and subsequently no funds being forwarded to the custodial parent as a result. The predictions we had, that many of us in our caucus and on all sides had, for inefficiency and disaster came true, very sadly true.

I want to take this opportunity I have today to share a few recent letters from constituents just to illustrate some of the problems. The Attorney General may not be familiar with them, as some were addressed to the family support plan and they may be tucked away in one of those cardboard boxes at Downsview, but these are true cases. If the Attorney General wants to ask me about them, I can personally verify the names to the minister. But since we are fairly conscious that this is a mean-spirited government, which is the guilty party in terms of non-compliance with family support payments and the lack of enforcement, I've chosen not to make public use of the constituents' last names in order to protect the truly innocent. Let me just read one:

"Two months ago I received a letter containing 'important news concerning the service offered to me.' It stated that the changes would speed up the delivery of my support payments by increasing the number of staff who are available to answer calls and by making electronic transfers of funds from employers directly to my bank account. Before this change, the support would come off my ex-husband's cheque on the day that he was paid and the money would be in my bank account within four working days. Now the money comes off his cheque on payday, the city...sends a cheque out to your office the same day, and it is taking two weeks before it is deposited into my bank account. As a result, my rent cheques have been returned. Where is this money sitting for two weeks and WHY? There is no point in phoning to talk to anyone as the numbers that were given to me to call are constantly busy. Please look into this ASAP. Money is tight enough without having to pay NSF charges for returned cheques when my money should be in my bank account!"

The government should pay the charges for the NSF cheques.

Another letter, if I may:

"Dear Sir:

"Please remove my name from your family support as I will now be receiving my payments directly from my husband.

"Every month since September my deposits are late and my husband is remitting my moneys before the 1st.

"I have to live, eat, pay bills just like you, and cannot cope with the stress of having to phone never to receive an answer, and when I do, the answer is my husband is in arrears and there is a support deduction order on my file, when in fact my husband has sent in the money before his due date. He is always on time.

"I have contacted my member of Parliament and have added my name to the list of many women who are in the same state as I.

"I hereby give you authority to request my name be taken off the family support plan."

It's just a litany of sad stories continually. Here's another sad commentary from another desperate constitu-



ent who, with her children, has been remarkably inconvenienced and deprived because of the complete mess of the supposedly reorganized family support plan:

"I am writing this letter concerning my support. It is being paid on a regular basis, but when there is a payment made, I have to wait a month before I receive this payment, all because it gets sent from" — I won't name the place — "to an office that is closed down in Thunder Bay, and then forwarded to Toronto. I have already had to move because I couldn't pay my rent. Then I had to borrow \$1,600 to move from my boss."

It absolutely goes on and on, and I find it really upsetting that we've had to listen for the last six weeks or so to the Attorney General telling us, "These are the payments we've made; everything's in order," when indeed these tragedies were not taking place before the closure of the regional office in August. I've letters upon letters here. I've been sent pictures of the children.

There is one more I want to read. I stood up in the House on a prior occasion — and we've all reported on the horror stories of our constituents. I want to read one that one constituent wrote, and I think wrote rather eloquently, to the Attorney General when she stated:

"You are not fulfilling your obligations as a government agency. I fought hard to ensure that my daughter's father would meet his financial obligation to her, and now this is not the case of a deadbeat parent but a 'deadbeat' bureaucracy that is failing to meet its mandate to children."

**Mr Crozier:** Good phrase.

**Mr Gravelle:** It's a great one, isn't it?

"You're backlogged, I'm sure, but whatever reason, my daughter's child support is lost somewhere and I am holding your agency responsible because in the chain of events, your link is where I see the failure has occurred. I am frustrated and very angry. Winter is on the way and my daughter needs warm clothing and I am relying on the child support" plan "to purchase what she needs for the upcoming cold season."

1700

**Mr Michael Brown:** Deadbeat government.

**Mr Gravelle:** Deadbeat government. It's something they just will not accept.

I find it astounding to hear the minister responsible for the family support plan, the Attorney General, say one day in this Legislature that there was an average of just two unresolved family support plan cases per constituency. My office alone currently has a multitude of cases which have not been — it's absolutely absurd — satisfactorily resolved. Certainly my colleagues here are equally frustrated. We have been in contact with the Attorney General on a regular basis.

These are not the only ones who have sought assistance. Who knows how many other, unreported cases are out there? The truth is that many cases perhaps haven't come to us. We know there are a lot more out there.

When I heard the Attorney General make those remarks I couldn't help but wonder whether his fellow colleagues are simply not reporting complaints to him or if their cases have been resolved first and those from members across the floor get left at the bottom of the heap, or in the cardboard box at Downsview, if you may.

I hope that isn't the case, because we know that the members of the government side are certainly — if constituents have any trust in them, they are going to them as well, and if they're not, I hope they're not hiding the cases.

I certainly have shared a few letters, but I could carry on forever. The instances I have focused on are mainly on non-payments or late payments or incorrect payments by family support. But the truth is that this is only one aspect. This was listed as priority number one in the propaganda piece on new and improved service that went to constituency offices recently. We know the disaster with priority number one and know what is happening, or should I say not happening, in the area of enforcement, that is, dealing with non-compliant payors.

I'd like to share with you, if I may, one last constituent letter, this time from Stacey. She makes reference to the sales pitch newsletter she received to advise her of your wonderful disorganization — excuse me for the rudeness, but it just gets so frustrating.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** You're not rude. You're just honest.

**Mr Gravelle:** I'm being honest. I can't help it.

I'll read part of it, because I know my time is running short: "I've called every five minutes and cannot get through. When I do actually get through, I'm on hold for up to 20 minutes waiting for a client services associate."

"They proceed to tell me, they've not received anything and someone will have to get back to me."

"There is no 24-hour service, if you call after 4:30 pm, the automated teller info tells you to call back in 30 minutes...and continues to tell you that till 8:30 am."

"How is not receiving support money a more specialized service and providing greater consistency by centralizing better for FSP clients?"

She's highlighting all the things the propaganda piece said.

"How are these changes (a) helping to speed up delivery of support money?"

"They're doing all they can to ensure there are no interruptions in our payments — yeah right." It's a well-written letter.

"It took them a week to phone me back and all they told me is the same runaround they've been telling me for the past three weeks, they've not received anything, yet the payor has deductions from his paycheque and his employer sent it out October 11...."

The absolute mess and chaos in the family support office and how they have affected the lives of thousands of women and children across the province is a disgrace and a terrible example of a mean-spirited government policy gone wrong. Since the start of this year we were aware of the Harris plan to close the regional offices, lay off 300 dedicated staff and save money by centralizing the operations in a very cold 1-800 world. In their horrid haste to downsize and help fund their tax scheme nobody would listen to the alternatives suggested by those of us in opposition or by their very own staff in the regional offices. When the government stubbornly went ahead with its plans to close the offices, including the one in Thunder Bay, absolute chaos resulted. Almost every day we have to listen to the Attorney General telling us his



plan is working when he knows full well that is not the case.

We've walked down memory lane. I've appreciated the opportunity to do this just on behalf of the hundreds of constituents who have come to my office. But let me remind you of one last thing, as I conclude: Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it. Minister, people's lives are being destroyed, and your stubbornness in not admitting your mistake and doing what needs to be done to fix the problem is infuriating. Hire the staff you need so that when people call the plan somebody answers. Stand up today and apologize to the women and children of the province who have not been able to pay their rent, buy food for their children or heat their homes because of this incompetence.

Christmas is fast approaching. What are we to tell people who still do not have their family support moneys to pay the rent or eat, let alone buy a turkey, purchase gifts or fill a stocking? Are the custodial parents, who are already taking the rap for the hardships, going to have to break the news to their children that Santa rode right over their rooftops? I tell you, Mr Harnick, Mr Attorney General, that Santa had better do a fly-past when he gets to your house. He's made a list, he's checked it twice and he's definitely found out who's naughty or nice. May I say too, Mr Attorney General, that you've been very naughty, and you know you've been naughty. We told you what was broken and how to repair it and you didn't do it.

**Interjection:** It's coal for Charlie.

**Mr Gravelle:** It's coal for Charlie. An old English legend tells us that rather than leaving the stocking of a naughty person empty, as Santa does, St Nicholas chose to leave a lump of coal instead. Should St Nick decide to leave a lump of coal in your Christmas sock, I wish you'd give me a call, Minister. I'm sure I could provide you with the address of some poor parent who would welcome using it for heat because the family support money is long overdue and so is the payment of the gas bill.

For the final time, and I know I speak on behalf of my colleagues, we implore you to recognize what has happened here. Certainly a lot of measures in the opposition day motion today we absolutely agree with, and we recognize that there are some parts of Bill 82, in terms of enforcement, that we support, but there are elements of the bill that concern us a great deal as well. We certainly hope there will be an opportunity to make some amendments to the bill when we get to that stage.

I ask you not to stand there any more and accuse us of being obstructionist or of delaying the process when you were the ones who made the decision to close the regional offices, the ones who put the province and the plan into complete chaos, the ones who introduced the bill and then waited 49 days to bring it to second reading debate. The people of Ontario will not forget that. The Attorney General has to acknowledge that it was those decisions and his refusal to listen to some of the changes we recommended that could have made the situation better. We implore the minister to recognize what he has done and apologize to the people of Ontario.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I appreciate the opportunity to join in the debate here today. I think I speak for many of the opposition members when I say that one of the most difficult things we find on this side of the House, in terms of our exasperation, is that this government continues to deny that the problems we have raised in the House consistently are problems that were created by the action of the Attorney General this summer.

The government members, the backbenchers, continue blithely to read their prepared texts that talk about the problems that were there in the past and that things are being fixed. They talk about the future and somehow want to bridge over from what was to what they want it to be and completely refuse to take responsibility for the piece in between, which is where we've been putting our focus: that to meet the Attorney General's quota of the cuts that are necessary to pay for the tax cut to your wealthy friends, he had to move quicker than he should have, and as a result thousands and thousands of women and children are being denied money that is rightfully and lawfully theirs. In addition, there are people paying support who are being stiffed as a result of the changes this government made.

What's really difficult to accept is that this government, this minister, knew that this kind of chaos was going to happen. It was in a report read out by my colleague from London Centre and emphasized by many of my colleagues, where it said very clearly that the transitional — I'm paraphrasing — time was going to be one of chaos, that it would be difficult to meet the service demands, and if there wasn't the proper money put in right at the time they may never catch up.

Then, God forbid MPPs should do their job, two of my colleagues, the member for Welland-Thorold and the member for Sudbury East, took a video camera and went with the security guard into this brand-new centralized location — which is supposed to justify and take the place of all the regional offices that were closed, like the one in my riding of Hamilton Centre, shut down, gone, the people laid off, decent paying jobs gone — had the audacity to go in there with the security guard and videotape virtually hallway after hallway after hallway of moving boxes full of files, desks and furniture equipment stacked up in the office area, nobody set up to work, and this at a time when the minister said: "Don't worry. All is well at the new office. We've got this in hand."

1710

That's what's so exasperating about what we've been dealing with. This government refuses to at least take responsibility and be upfront and honest about the fact that the problems we've raised have nothing to do with what's gone on in the past. They're a direct result and only a result of the actions taken by Mike Harris's Attorney General over the last few months. This government refuses to accept that. They hoped they could just paper it over and pretend it didn't happen.

I only have a few minutes because there are so many of us who have so many examples in our ridings. This is a province-wide problem, and whether the Tories want to admit they're getting the phone calls or not, we're sure getting them. I find it hard to believe that in ridings right



next door it's not happening, but that seems to be the way they want to play it. So I don't have a lot of time but I do want to raise some issues that have happened in Hamilton.

First of all, I want to give credit to a few people who deserve it. First and foremost, I think I speak for an awful lot of Hamiltonians when I express a great deal of thanks to Denise Davy, who is a highly respected professional reporter working with the Hamilton Spectator, and extend that also to the Hamilton Spectator editorial board itself, which has also taken a position. As people know, they are not exactly a horde of socialists over there and there are a lot of things the government does that they like. But in this case they're calling the government to task. Just to read the last paragraph of the editorial that they put out just last month, it said:

"When the shaky effectiveness of the family support plan is further weakened by careless cost-cutting and restructuring, this belief becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. And the children and parents who depend on this plan for vital income support are the main losers."

Our community thanks Denise Davy and the editorial board for having the courage to say that the emperor has no clothes on this issue.

**Ms Lankin:** Here's another editorial.

**Mr Christopherson:** I'm handed another editorial from the Kitchener-Waterloo Record. Interesting. Oh, very interesting. The headline on this one says, "Deadbeat Harnick Should Now Resign." Whose riding would that be?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Gary Leadston.

**Mr Christopherson:** That would be Gary Leadston's riding.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Wettlaufer.

**Mr Christopherson:** Mr Wettlaufer. Oh, St Mary's Hospital area. Yes, right. Okay, it says:

"For the pain he is inflicting on hundreds of families denied their support payments, Ontario Attorney General Charles Harnick should resign. For all the single parents who have had to go on welfare, all the children who have been thrust into poverty because of his ministry's incompetence, he should step down. And for the frustration he has caused countless decent parents who paid support that isn't getting through thanks to bureaucratic bungling, Harnick should accept he is accountable and go."

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** They want another paragraph. I've only got eight minutes, guys.

"That, in our parliamentary system, is what ministerial responsibility means, and have no doubt that as Attorney General, Harnick is ultimately responsible for the utter mess that has been made of the family support plan. Like any curious kid who ever dismantled a clock but couldn't reassemble it, Harnick got hold of something that worked and left it in pieces." That's what the Kitchener-Waterloo Record had to say.

I want to in the few minutes that I have left — it's amazing how quickly the time goes by when you care an awful lot about an issue, and particularly when you're dealing with a government that refuses, just absolutely stands there and bald-faced — I can't use the word, but refuses to accept responsibility. I think the public know

what I'm saying. It's very frustrating because they know they're wrong and they're even hearing that on editorial pages, not just from opposition members.

I want to mention two more quick things before I sit down. One is that we have a group of people here from Hamilton today, and I'm really pleased they took the time. It shows how much they care, how real these issues are. They're here because they can't believe this government's refusing to accept responsibility. They want to see for themselves what's going on in this Parliament when the Attorney General of the province refuses to accept responsibility for a situation that he caused solely himself. They're here today and I want to thank them. I won't go into the circumstances — time doesn't allow it today; maybe another time I can — but Helen Teepell is here, Sandra Dunsdon is here, and Rick Hunter-Wolff. He's one of the ones who is paying and is being stiffed and shafted by the actions of the Attorney General. Thank you very much for being here. I appreciate it. You've made a real difference.

Lastly, I want to also thank Marie Lafleur and Agnes Scheer, who held a community meeting on November 14 and organized a group of Hamiltonians called Deadbeat Government — Payors and Payees Unite.

I will end on this: It's interesting once again that on a public meeting of major controversy, local Tories in Hamilton-Wentworth were invited, and just like on the issue of injured workers and just like on the issue of rent control, they didn't have the guts to come out and defend the action of their Attorney General. They ought to hang their heads in shame.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** It's interesting, some of the comments the opposition make and the concerns about this particular bill. They make reference to the director of family support refusing to register an order. They're concerned about closing a file, concerned about voluntary withdrawal from the family support plan.

Under the new legislation, the director of the Family Responsibility Office will have authority to refuse to register an order. The type of orders this might apply to would include nominal support orders, situations where the meaning of the order is vague or ambiguous or the payor is in prison serving a sentence of five years or longer and has no assets or income available to satisfy the support order and any arrears under the order. I can assure you that each order would be carefully reviewed and assessed before any decision to refuse to register an order is made.

Closing a file: Nearly \$1 billion in this province is owing to children and women in support payment arrears. Every single month, the family support plan caseload goes up by another 1,400 cases. The new act gives the program the ability to close cases where enforcement is unreasonable or impractical. This will enable the new Family Responsibility Office to focus its resources and expertise on those cases that need government intervention, those cases that are contributing to a huge amount of arrears that payors currently owe the plan.

The Family Responsibility Office will stop enforcing a support order only where it is clear that recovery of money is simply not possible, where all options for obtaining the money have been exhausted. This could, for



example, include cases where the support payor is serving a term of incarceration greater than five years and has no other assets available to satisfy the support obligation or where the support recipient bypasses the program by continuing to accept direct payment from the payor.

Our government has no intention of closing a file until it is abundantly clear that we cannot get the money for a plan recipient. Giving the Family Responsibility Office the authority to close files is not about improving statistics. It is unconscionable for anyone not to pay their child support. If there are arrears, we want to know about it and to go after the defaulting parent. We want to focus our resources on the problem cases, the cases that under the old plan were hard to enforce, the cases where government intervention and services can realistically make a difference in getting children and women the money they deserve and are legally entitled to receive.

The fact is that for some cases, regrettably, the trail is cold. Why? Because the previous government did not put in place tough enforcement measures and act decisively and proactively on behalf of our children and women when there was still some chance to get money flowing to them. If new information comes to light that will lead to the recovery of money, a recipient will be able to re-enter the program.

1720

**Voluntary withdrawal:** When children and women do not receive the money that is legally and rightfully theirs, they suffer. They are forced into poverty and on to social assistance. Our government believes that parents who do not meet their family support payment responsibility deserve society's full condemnation. However, there are many responsible parents in Ontario who abide by the law. Many of us have heard from these parents as this legislation has been discussed. They fully meet their support obligations. They do not need to have government officials involved in their personal business, as has been going on for several years. This government has no intention of telling those responsible parents how to run their lives.

The Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act makes it possible for responsible parents to opt out of the program and not have government continuously in their face. In recognizing that there are parents who are fulfilling their support obligations, the opting-out provision of the new act means that the expertise and resources of our government's new Family Responsibility Office can be focused entirely on the problem cases, those where defaulting parents are not acting responsibly, causing hardship and suffering for children and women.

Automatically filing with voluntary opting out, giving responsible parents the choice of making their own private arrangements without the necessity of government intervention, honours the commitment this government made in its platform, the Common Sense Revolution, that parents who have reached amicable separation settlements and who have no dispute over support payments should be able to opt out of the government-mandated program.

At the same time, we know there are, regrettably, far too many situations where a spouse is vulnerable and could be subjected to coercion or abuse. In some cases a

spouse, for a variety of reasons, may be in an unequal bargaining relationship. These spouses may want to remain in the program. They may not want to have contact with the payor or they may fear that without the program they will not receive their payments. To protect women in those situations the new act gives judges the authority to prohibit spouses from opting out of the family responsibility program where they find it is appropriate. Any recipient who has opted out will be able to return to the family responsibility program at any time.

Giving responsible parties the option of opting out of this system is not an issue of who is or who isn't stigmatized. This is an issue of: If, where and how should government get involved? Where and how can government resources be best used? If the parties are acting responsibly, they can opt out of the government system. If a payor is not acting responsibly or if a payor is not meeting his or her support payment obligations, or if the court considers that a recipient is going to be at risk, then the government is going to get involved. Those parties are definitely going to be in the government program, no ifs, ands or buts. If a recipient decides to return to the program — and again, she can do so immediately, at any time, for any reason — she will be returning to a support enforcement program that has some of the toughest, most stringent enforcement measures in North America.

The opposition is saying that we should be withdrawing this bill. However, members of both opposition parties have expressed their support for the provisions of Bill 82. It is therefore difficult for me to understand why they would now be asking the Attorney General to withdraw this very important bill. Do they in fact want more women and children to get the money to which they are legally entitled and rightfully deserve? Do they not want us to crack down on parents who don't pay their child support? Bill 82 gives Ontario some of the toughest support enforcement measures in North America. However, we won't be able to increase compliance rates and get more money to children and women until this legislation is passed.

The provisions of Bill 82 and the service improvements the ministry is making to the support enforcement program will result in prompt payments to the women and children who depend on it. We will have some of the toughest support payment enforcement measures in North America. This bill contains 10 tough new tools, and they are:

- Suspending the driving licences of defaulting payors.

- Reporting defaulting payors to credit bureaus.

- Giving the new Family Responsibility Office the power to register support orders as security interests under the Personal Property Security Act.

- Amending the Creditors' Relief Act to give priority to all support arrears over other judgement creditors.

- Giving the Family Responsibility Office the authority to ask the court to order the production of financial statements and make orders against third parties who shelter the assets and income of defaulting payors to help them avoid support orders.

- Closing the loophole that allows support payors to shelter funds in joint bank accounts with other parties so



that the Family Responsibility Office will have the authority to garnish 50% of the money in a joint bank account.

— Seizure of defaulting payors' lottery winnings over \$1,000.

— Expanding the definition of "income" to enable the Family Responsibility Office to be much more effective in obtaining the money that is owed to children and to women by those who are intermittently employed or have non-standard employment arrangements.

— Giving the Family Responsibility Office greater power to trace and locate defaulting parents and obtain information about the payor's assets and income.

— Screening all provincial government appointments to make sure that our government does not appoint people who do not pay their child support.

From my riding, we have some examples. Let me tell you about this woman. Arrears owing: some \$16,000. No money received since July 1995. The payor owns and operates two businesses, lives in a new home, owns property in the girlfriend's name and regularly takes trips south. Ongoing enforcement of the family support plan is not successful in collecting this money. A default hearing was scheduled for July 25 but did not proceed as the payor was not successfully served even though they were provided with verification of the payor's address and a photograph. The family support plan will attempt another default hearing.

I have several more like this. Once this bill comes in and the acts are changed, we will be getting the money for the women and children, as it should be.

In winding up, nearly \$1 billion is owing to the women and children of this province in support payment arrears. Every single month the family support plan's caseload goes up by another 1,400 cases. The new act gives the program the ability to close cases where enforcement is unreasonable or impractical. This will enable the new Family Responsibility Office to focus its resources and expertise on those cases that need government intervention and services and eliminate the wasting of resources on cases where there is virtually no possibility of recovering the arrears.

The Family Responsibility Office will stop enforcing a support order only where it is clear that recovering money is simply not possible. This could, for example, include cases where the support recipient continues to accept direct payment from the payor, thus circumventing the program, or where the support payor is serving a term of incarceration greater than five years and has no other assets available to satisfy the support obligation. If new information comes to light that will lead to the recovery of the money, a recipient will be able to re-enter the program.

The Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act ensures that government resources are focused where they will be most effective: to crack down on defaulting parents and enforce payment orders, because not paying child support, not complying with a court order, is no longer acceptable in the province of Ontario.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to respond to some of the issues that have

been raised in this debate.

It's worth noting that the statistics that deal with the family support plan tell quite a story. The statistics indicate that the plan gets 50,000 calls a day, 8,000 pieces of mail, and what's really telling is that 46% of people enrolled with the plan get no payment at all.

**1730**

There is now close to \$1 billion in arrears owing on the plan. I will tell you it's inconceivable to me that someone would bring a motion today to ask for Bill 82 to be withdrawn, a bill that will start to permit us to collect arrears owing on this plan, arrears that accumulate at the rate of \$100 million a year.

It's inconceivable to me that someone would ask that this bill be withdrawn, and that says to me that what people who are asking for this really want is the status quo. They're happy to see families at risk, 46% of whom don't get the money that they are entitled to, don't get anything and see arrears accumulating at the rate of \$1 billion today, \$100 million a year.

It's inconceivable to me that in that situation, and when you're trying to create a bill that's going to permit you to collect money, someone would say: "We're opposed to it. We want it withdrawn." I don't understand that. I don't understand how that can be.

I don't want this debate to take place in a vacuum, but Families Against Deadbeats are here today, Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears are here today. Interestingly enough, a letter was sent to Ms Martel, the member for Sudbury East, by Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears. The date of the letter was November 20, 1996, and this is what the letter says —

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** You screwed up, Minister. You will lose the limo.

**Ms Martel:** What will we do with 40% less staff? Explain that to me.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Member for Lake Nipigon, member for Sudbury.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** "May we remind you and your party that we had to literally take picket signs to the homes and offices of the fathers who chose not to pay child support.

"May we also remind you that we picketed the Attorney General's office in June 1993 addressing the issues that are contained in Bill 82. We did meet with the family support director shortly after that and were told that a bill similar to Bill 82 would be passed by the NDP. Well, it never did.

"Children are the individuals who suffered from the failure of your party, the NDP, to pass this legislation. Did you care? Not visibly. After all, children do not vote. In effect, nobody else voted for the NDP either. What else could one expect?

"Today, we heard your complaint in the House" —

**Ms Martel:** How many staff did you lay off? How many offices were closed? Who did that? Were you responsible for that?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Sudbury East.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** — "with respect to parents who have not received child support cheques. Please remember that your own government, the NDP, chose to ignore this very issue. You failed to pass legislation that was



needed then and is now being passed. Your government failed in its" —

**Ms Martel:** Financing the big guys, financing on the backs of women and children. I hope you are all proud.

**Mr Pouliot:** It's the rich against us.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, order. The member for Sudbury East, the member for Lake Nipigon, I would ask you to refrain from heckling, please. Minister.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I know they don't want to hear this, but the letter goes on to say: "Your government failed in its obligation to those least able to fight for themselves — our children. Your shrill cry today is as hollow as were your promises in the past."

We have a bill that's now before the Legislature, Bill 82. We'll be able to suspend drivers' licences for those who don't pay their child support. We will be able to report them to credit bureaus. We will be able to implement real collection procedures, procedures that will get the money from people, and not have a family support plan that has no tools. We are going to be able to let people who don't need the government to regulate their affairs opt out of the plan.

**Mr Christopherson:** Tell my constituents why they don't have their money, Charlie.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Mr Speaker, I might tell you that \$35 million has been paid out to people —

**Mr Christopherson:** They're right here, Charlie. Look at them.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The member for Hamilton Centre, please. You'll have a chance. One of your members will have a chance to rebut.

**Mr Christopherson:** I want him to speak to my constituents.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It's his turn. Minister.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** When you want to talk about real people, I suppose the only real people are the real people they point at. But what about MAFIA? What about Families Against Deadbeats? They are desperately concerned about passing Bill 82.

**Mr Christopherson:** What about the families who used to get support payments?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I listened to, "Why has the bill not been called for 40 days?" Can I ask you, were you in support of it 40 days ago and now you're opposed to it? If you were in support of it 40 days ago —

**Mr Christopherson:** These are real people. You are hurting them.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The member for Hamilton Centre, I will ask you to refrain from heckling; the member for Sudbury East also. There are three minutes to go. Your member will have a chance to rebut. Just wait for that time. Minister.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** If they were in favour of this bill 40 days ago, I suspect they might be in favour of it today, but they want to play those political games. They can hurt the people then from Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears, they can hurt the people from Families Against Deadbeats. Those are real people too. Let me remind you, those are real people too. Real people, 115,000 of them, have received cheques from the family support plan this month. We've sent out cheques of almost \$34 million, and cheques are going out.

I might take a couple of minutes to talk about the letter that was sent today, and I'll read excerpts from that letter, to Mr Howard Hampton, the leader of the New Democratic Party. It says:

"We believe that the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, is good legislation and will accomplish our goals for tougher enforcement. That is why we need you to stop your political games and expedite the passage of the legislation. Putting your political motives ahead of the needs of Ontario's children is reprehensible. Shame on you."

That's what the letter says. This is nothing new, however —

**Mr Christopherson:** Shame on you. You shut the Hamilton office. They don't have any money.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, order, please. The member for Hamilton Centre, I don't need to advise you any more that if you persist I'll have no other choice than to ask you to leave the House.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The letter goes on to say:

"While your party was in power, you gave us empty promises of passing effective and meaningful legislation to stop the abuse of parents who neglected their responsibility to pay support to their children. Now you are in a position to ensure quick passage of this important legislation and you are failing us again. We beg you to stop the games and let us get on with our fight against irresponsible parents."

This very important bill will provide for the enforcement ability of the Family Responsibility Office to start to collect the \$1 billion that has been allowed to accumulate. That \$1 billion is money that isn't going to women and children, and they are real people. Forty-six per cent of the people who are registered with this plan get nothing, 77% maybe get a small amount, but only 23% of people registered with this plan get what is coming to them. This bill will permit us at the earliest possible time to begin to have enforcement techniques that will be effective and that will protect and put money into the hands of women and children.

I'm appalled that they're asking that this bill be withdrawn. Mr Speaker, I will bet you they can't look the people in the gallery in the eye and say that to them.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Your time has expired.

1740

**Mrs Boyd:** It's a pleasure to have the opportunity to refute some of the misinformation that has been coming across the floor from the government party. There are a number of issues that need to be dealt with right off the top and the first is that from the very first week that Bill 82 was put in this place, I had a conversation with the minister, I had a conversation with the deputy minister, and I indicated very clearly that our party was prepared to support the portions of this bill that involved improved enforcement.

We had qualms about some of those because of the legal challengeability of them, but we said we would support all of the new enforcement provisions in the bill. We explained that our concern was about specific portions of the bill that would allow people to opt out, because there is no protection in this bill against



coercion. There is a provision that a judge can require an order to be enforced, but the judge is not going to be there two or three months after the order is not required to be enforced to deal with the kind of coercion that we know historically will happen.

I ask the members of the governing party to wake up and realize that non-payment of support orders is an epidemic. What makes you think that without the coercion of a support deduction order that's going to be enforced, no matter how you try and run and hide, these people who will not pay their support are suddenly going to see the light? They will agree for a couple of months, they will fool a judge, they will look as though it's amicable, and then they will stop paying because that is the circumstance we have seen again and again.

It is no comfort to people to say, "Well, people can come back on the plan," because we know that you are going to charge a fee to come back on the plan and we also know that it will then have to start all over again with all of the information-gathering, all of the process to even get that plan into the enforcement stream.

The permission for the director of the plan to determine that something is uncollectible and therefore close the file is simply unconscionable. We can give you chapter and verse of example after example of orders that were over \$20,000, that looked uncollectible, but after a time people came out from behind their blind, moved back to Ontario from another jurisdiction, began to declare income again and they were caught. We can show case after case after case where it might look as if those cases were uncollectible, and it turned out over time that the ability of the person to maintain a low profile and escape the plan could not carry out over time. That will happen again.

The member tried to use the issue of someone who is incarcerated for over five years and has no assets. Well, anybody who has any large experience with our prison system and with the realities of people who are incarcerated for over five years knows that the ability of those people to hide assets before they are incarcerated and to come out of prison and then have access to those assets is legion. That's no comfort to the person whose partner indeed has assets and can come out and the file is closed and they can start to use them.

What we asked the deputy minister and the minister to do was put the enforcement processes into place, suspend the rest of this bill, take it away, put all these enforcement measures into place, get them going and then see what is really uncollectible. Because I can tell you from experience — and I job-shadowed in a number of family support offices — the issue of people who are evading payment is an issue of people who are determined not to fulfil their responsibilities for one reason or another.

Some do that immediately upon the breakdown of the relationship. We have hundreds of cases of people who have actually cut off their own noses to spite their faces, quit jobs, gone on to welfare or hidden their assets by taking a low salary and plowing their money back into a business. We see those all the time and you must too, because we're not unusual MPPs. You must get these claims. You know that happens as well.

Then there are the people who in very good faith say, "Yes, I will pay my support," and they do that for a

while and then they make another relationship. They may have another family and, all of a sudden, they begin to think to themselves: "I'm not getting very much out of all the money I put into this family. I've got new responsibilities. I'd rather not fulfil that responsibility."

What this bill is doing by allowing the opt-out provision and allowing the closure of files is basically saying to women and children: "Yes, the government doesn't care that over time this may all fall apart, this goodwill may disappear. We're going to make you pursue the payor. We're going to make you be the one who makes this person fulfil his or her responsibility."

I would say to you that because of the power and control issues — the member for Northumberland suggested that there may be occasions when there's an imbalance of power. Quite frankly, non-payment of support is all about power. It is about financial control over a partner. That is what it is about. When people want to do this, they do not renege on their obligations. But the fact that so many people do not pay is an indication of how hard it is to enforce family responsibility.

We made an offer and we make the offer today: If the government withdraws Bill 82 and comes back with a bill with all those enforcement proposals in it, we will by unanimous consent absolutely give it second and third reading just like that — done. It could have been done today. It could have been done on October 2. The government knew that the problem is this part and the government knew we will not agree to that without people understanding the implications of it.

Let us read from the compendium about who might have their order not enforced by the plan:

"Where the meaning of the order is ambiguous or unclear." What do you do then? Right now the family support plan does everything it can to ensure that an order, even if it is ambiguous and unclear, is enforced and encourages the recipient and the payor to go back to court and get an order that is clearer.

"Where the quantum is nominal, not fixed, or is expressed as a percentage of income or is dependent on variable facts." What is a nominal fee? I can tell you, for many of the people in the gallery this afternoon nominal could be \$25. It may make the difference between a child having the possibility of participating in school activities and not. A nominal fee could be very important to the income of a family.

Or one that's not fixed: Many orders that are outstanding, particularly old orders, give a percentage of the person's income. It may not have been a wise order, but it's the order that the person has in hand. This would allow the director to just decide not to enforce those orders.

"Where it is dependent on variable facts." What about the seasonal employment? Very often, those orders that depend on variable facts were there exactly to deal with seasonal income. Yes, the provision in this bill that would talk about periodic payments would catch that, but it wouldn't be according to the order, it would be according to your legislation, and there's very great ambiguity.

The last one is, "Where the order has long-outstanding arrears, including those that predate SCOE." The group that was here today, MAFIA, many of those members

have long-standing arrears, way before SCOE. I know this because we worked with them. One of the members said we had done nothing to improve this plan, and that is simply not the case. The MAFIA group, which was the most vocal group, came forward to us and said the prime thing they were asking us to do was to remove the professional licences of people who were not paying their family support.

We spent a year and a half negotiating with professional societies like the OMA, the law society, the society of engineers and with some of the trades that license people as well, to try and say: "How can we do this? We take this seriously. We cannot remove licences or the ability to practise without your cooperation." In the end they refused. In the end they believed very strongly that that was not part of their function. It wasn't that we weren't trying to accede to the requests of a group like MAFIA; it was that their solution, the removal of professional licences, could not be accomplished.

I said the other day in the discussion on Bill 82 that all of these proposals are proposals that have been taken off the shelf, work that was done in the family support plan by the expert staff that worked there and was there on the shelf for the current Attorney General. If you are in such a rush to enforce support, why did it take you so long? Why did it take you a year and a bit to even bring in the act? Those proposals were there when you came into office. If this was so important — you took a year before you even put that into the Legislature and then you took 49 days before you called it.

So don't tell us that it's not appropriate for us to discuss the concerns we have about this bill in the Legislature. That's our job, and we are simply doing our job for the women and children of this province who need someone to speak up on their behalf.

The misconception about the plan has been set in people's minds by you as a government. You think it is a drawback that the plan grows by 1,200 to 1,400 people a month. That's the way it is designed. Everybody who gets an order comes into the plan. Of course those marriage breakdowns happen at a very unfortunate rate and those orders come forward at 1,200 to 1,400 a month. We knew that when this plan went in, and you're quite right that we didn't have the technological capacity to deal with that appropriately.

The member for Kitchener-Wilmot, who suggested we did nothing, may not know that that's not so. One of the things we were doing was working with the Royal Bank, as you are, to get the automatic deduction into place. It

is hard for a lot of people to accept automatic deduction, particularly when they have not been experiencing particularly good service. We as a government worked all the time with the Royal Bank and other providers around how we could develop a system, given the limited capital dollars we had, that would fulfil the multiple need of the kind of system you envision.

You don't have it in place. You've just put out proposals and it is going to take a long time to get in place. A system that can speak to the federal government's systems, can speak to other provinces' systems, can speak to every system you have in this province is a very sophisticated system, and it has to be a system that's going to be able to do online immediately what you want it to do.

I know how difficult it is going to be for you to develop that, because we started the work in 1993. We know that you are holding out hope to people that the day this act is proclaimed suddenly everything's going to change. You know that's not so. You know there is no rush about this bill because you know you don't have the technological capacity to do it. The minister admitted that in his speech the other day in answer to one of the questions.

Let's just be very clear. All of this accusation today that we're being mischievous and political about this is not true. We have very real concerns about pieces of this bill. If you were prepared to bring forward only the enforcement things, we would pass it in a minute. We are saying to you that if you want it done quickly, withdraw this, show that you can bring those forward, and we'll pass it immediately. But we need to talk about these other provisions in the act, because what you are proposing to do is to say that you give up on \$450 million to \$500 million of money that is not owed to you but is owed for the most part to women and children, and perhaps some men, in this province. It is not yours to write off, it is not up to you to close files, it is not up to you to decide what is uncollectible.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Hampton has moved Opposition Day number 5. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion the nays have it.

I declare the motion lost.

Being close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1755.*



# CONTENTS

Wednesday 27 November 1996

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Hospital financing</b>	
Mr Cleary . . . . .	5373
<b>Labour disputes</b>	
Mr Christopherson . . . . .	5373
<b>Grey Cup</b>	
Mrs Ross . . . . .	5373
<b>Education financing</b>	
Mr Gravelle . . . . .	5373
<b>Workfare</b>	
Mrs Boyd . . . . .	5374
<b>Economic development in Northumberland</b>	
Mr Galt . . . . .	5374
<b>School bus safety</b>	
Mr Hoy . . . . .	5374
<b>Highway inspectors</b>	
Mr Bisson . . . . .	5374
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Mr Tilson . . . . .	5375

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Guardianship of institutionalized children</b>	
Mrs McLeod . . . . .	5376
Mrs Ecker . . . . .	5376
<b>Economic statement</b>	
Mr Phillips . . . . .	5377
Mr Harris . . . . .	5377, 5378
Mr Hampton . . . . .	5378
<b>Education financing</b>	
Mr Hampton . . . . .	5379
Mr Snobelen . . . . .	5379, 5384
Mr Patten . . . . .	5383
Mr Bartolucci . . . . .	5384
<b>Hospital restructuring</b>	
Mrs McLeod . . . . .	5380
Mr Wilson . . . . .	5380
<b>Child care</b>	
Ms Lankin . . . . .	5381
Mrs Ecker . . . . .	5381

## Family support plan

Mr Hudak . . . . .	5381
Mr Harnick . . . . .	5382, 5384
Mrs Boyd . . . . .	5384
<b>Highway inspectors</b>	
Mr Colle . . . . .	5382
Mr Palladini . . . . .	5382
<b>Workers' compensation</b>	
Mr Christopherson . . . . .	5382
Mrs Witmer . . . . .	5383
<b>Education reform</b>	
Mrs Ross . . . . .	5383
Mr Snobelen . . . . .	5383

## PETITIONS

<b>School bus safety</b>	
Mr Hoy . . . . .	5385
<b>Adult education</b>	
Ms Churley . . . . .	5385
Mrs Munro . . . . .	5386
<b>Tax reduction</b>	
Mrs McLeod . . . . .	5386
<b>Education financing</b>	
Ms Lankin . . . . .	5386
<b>Rideau Regional Centre</b>	
Mr Jordan . . . . .	5386
<b>North York Branson Hospital</b>	
Mr Kwinter . . . . .	5386
<b>Labour dispute</b>	
Mr Christopherson . . . . .	5386
<b>Parole system</b>	
Mrs Ross . . . . .	5387
<b>Rent regulation</b>	
Mr Curling . . . . .	5387
<b>Ontario Correctional Institute</b>	
Mrs Boyd . . . . .	5387
<b>Child care</b>	
Mr Fox . . . . .	5387
<b>Prescription drugs</b>	
Mr Ruprecht . . . . .	5387
<b>Occupational health and safety</b>	
Mr Martin . . . . .	5388

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on government agencies</b>	
Mr Laughren . . . . .	5388
Report deemed adopted . . . . .	5388
<b>Standing committee on regulations and private bills</b>	
Mr Barrett . . . . .	5388
Report adopted . . . . .	5388

## OPPOSITION DAY

<b>Family support plan, opposition day motion number 5, Mr Hampton</b>	
Mr Hampton . . . . .	5388
Mr Kormos . . . . .	5390
The Acting Speaker . . . . .	5390
Mr Tilson . . . . .	5390
Mrs Papatello . . . . .	5392
Ms Martel . . . . .	5395
Mr Leadston . . . . .	5396
Mr Gravelle . . . . .	5398
Mr Christopherson . . . . .	5403
Mr Galt . . . . .	5404
Mr Harnick . . . . .	5406
Mrs Boyd . . . . .	5407
Negated . . . . .	5409

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Clarke T. Rollins</b>	
Mr Rollins . . . . .	5375
Mr Danford . . . . .	5375
Mr Bradley . . . . .	5375
Mr Wildman . . . . .	5376
The Speaker . . . . .	5376

CA204  
XI  
-023

Government  
Publications



No. 130

N° 130

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 28 November 1996

Jeudi 28 novembre 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 28 November 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 28 novembre 1996

*The House met at 1002.  
Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

### MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE

Mr Hoy moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 78, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act /  
Projet de loi 78, Loi modifiant le Code de la route.

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** Every school day 800,000 primary and high school students put their faith in the owners and operators of Ontario's school buses. Every school day parents trust the traditional school bus to transport their children to a place of learning and to deliver them home safely. Every school day more than one family's confidence is shaken by more than one careless driver.

Too many drivers are approaching a stationary yellow school bus with no more consideration than that given to a yellow traffic light, and too many children are paying the price for such reckless behaviour through personal injury or death.

That is the tragedy which recently shocked my riding, as I know it has previously shocked several of the ridings represented in this House.

Last January 17-year-old Ryan Marcuzzi, the youngest daughter of Larry and Colleen Marcuzzi, who are with us today in the members' gallery, was boarding her school bus when she was struck and killed by a car travelling 80 kilometres an hour from the opposite direction. The driver ignored the bus's flashing red lights, the extended stop sign and blaring horn from the school bus driver, who was helpless to prevent the impending tragedy.

With the encouragement and support of Larry and Colleen Marcuzzi I present Bill 78 for second reading in Ryan's memory, but I caution the House that Ryan's death was not an isolated incident. Since October 1974 five children have died in my riding at the hands of careless drivers who have ignored the flashing red lights of a school bus. Those children were going to school to prepare for their future. Instead, their future was tragically snatched away from them.

Ignoring school bus lights is not a rural Ontario versus urban Ontario problem. It is an Ontario problem.

The last survey carried out by the Ministry of Transportation shows that when a car meets a school bus, there is a better than one in 20 chance that the driver will attempt to pass illegally.

A current bus watch program operating in the Hamilton-Wentworth area receives approximately 40 to 60 complaints per month about motorists who have failed to stop for school buses that are loading and unloading passengers even though the red flashing signals are activated. But Hamilton-Wentworth's conviction rate, like similar conviction rates across the province, is only a fraction of what it should be because the Ontario Highway Traffic Act fails to provide adequately for the safety of children using the school bus system.

The barrier to a conviction is identification. Current law requires that a driver passing a school bus be clearly identified before charges can be laid under the Highway Traffic Act. School bus drivers and other witnesses can often identify the licence plate number, make, model and colour of the offending vehicle, but most cannot see the face of a driver long enough to make a positive identification.

The province of Ontario has taken many positive steps to safeguard our children from serious injury in recreational activities. It is time for the Legislature to protect those same children as they get on and off their school bus by sending a clear message to drivers that violations to the laws governing the passing of school buses will not be tolerated.

Bill 78 sends that message. Bill 78 attempts to correct the long-standing problem of identifying drivers of vehicles who recklessly endanger children boarding or leaving school buses. The bill imposes liability on the owner of any vehicle who fails to stop for a school bus with flashing lights.

How serious is the problem? In a recent Toronto Star article the Ministry of Transportation is reported to have obtained 1,100 convictions over two years. A ministry spokesperson told the Star that those 1,100 convictions show that the problem is already being taken seriously. But it isn't, because the ministry does not compile statistics on reported violations. We don't have an accurate ratio of convictions to violations.

School bus drivers tell us that they are passed illegally twice per shift. There are 16,000 school buses in Ontario. At two violations per shift, I'll leave it to the House to do the mathematics. You can see for yourself that the ministry does not have a handle on the problem. They barely have their finger on the pulse.

With limited resources the police are stretched to the limit and cannot mount the types of regular blitzes needed to catch violators under the provisions of the existing Highway Traffic Act. They cannot follow 16,000 buses around daily, and that's why the Police Association of Ontario supports Bill 78. They say my bill is a positive step towards insuring the safety of school children in Ontario.



The principle of vehicle liability is not new to Ontario. All parking tickets are issued using the principle of vehicle liability. Photo-radar worked on this same premise. While I recognize that photo-radar is no longer enforced on our highways, the government has kept its vehicle liability provisions on the books. Not only that, the collection of tolls along 407 will work on the same principle of vehicle liability.

1010

Justice will not be denied because of vehicle liability. It's simple enough to show your innocence. The question becomes, how can we justify the idea of vehicle liability for the collection of tolls or parking fines if we are not prepared, as legislators, to extend the practice to the protection of our children?

Owning and operating a motor vehicle remains a privilege, not an automatic right, in Ontario. With the privilege comes responsibility and accountability. In instances such as those outlined in Bill 78, vehicle liability is both fair and just in asking that a vehicle owner either accept the responsibility for those who operate his or her motor vehicle or identify the driver who is operating said vehicle at the time of the violation so that the province can seek accountability.

Bill 78 does not attempt to unfairly penalize a vehicle owner. The vehicle itself must be properly identified to the satisfaction of the courts. An owner who can prove that a driver other than himself was in control of the vehicle would not be charged.

Only owners who fail to identify a driver will face fines beginning at \$1,000 for a first-time conviction and \$2,000 for a second and subsequent conviction. Drivers will face a fine beginning at \$500 for a first-time conviction and \$1,000 for subsequent convictions. Only in the case where the driver has been directly identified will the crown be permitted to ask for the removal of up to six demerit points under the provisions of the existing legislation.

As with other laws, including those already pertaining to vehicle liability, it will be up to the courts to ensure that justice is served. Frivolous or unsubstantiated charges will not hold up in court.

Bill 78 is not an attack on civil liberties. Ask the parents of dead or injured children whose civil liberties have been breached when an offender is shielded by an inadequate law.

None the less, the bill has been carefully written using the exact, same language as other government vehicle liability legislation. At this time I would like to commend the Minister of Transportation for keeping the spirit of safe highways and roadways alive, thus making the implementation of Bill 78 possible.

I'm also confident that Bill 78 would successfully withstand a court challenge since it only imposes a fine on vehicle owners and excludes the penalties of imprisonment and driver licence suspension as a result of conviction or default. Once again, it uses the same government legislation.

The law specifically states that when a vehicle approaches a school bus with a flashing light, either from the back or the front, the vehicle must come to a complete stop. It does not say, "Proceed with caution," nor

does it say that the driver may proceed if he or she believes the road is clear. It says, "Stop." But the law is virtually unenforceable without the changes contained in Bill 78.

Bill 78 has the endorsement of parents, teachers, school boards, the Ontario School Bus Association, the Police Association of Ontario and has had an educational program put forth by Laidlaw Transit. That's why the joint Essex county school boards' public awareness committee has gone on to educational awareness on this issue.

Bill 78 will result in the protection of Ontario school bus users without eroding the civil liberties of Ontario's drivers. The children are calling. I ask that the members of this House answer that call and pass Bill 78 into legislation.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I'm pleased to rise today to support this private member's bill. It is indeed a tragedy that we have seen so many children killed and injured in this province. Even though we have on our highways signs warning motorists that it is the law that they must stop both ways when a school bus stops, even though we have the kind of safety features such as the flashing lights and the stop sign that rises from the side of the bus, there are some people who are not obeying that. The tragedies that result should be unacceptable to us all.

I commend the member for Essex-Kent for bringing forward this bill and recognize that he has done so in memory of a child who was killed in his own riding. That should be something that gives us all pause. This child was unfortunately not alone and we need to do everything in our power to ensure that there are not more tragedies of this kind.

I say to the member that the measures he is proposing have been approved by the parent-teacher associations and home and school associations throughout the province. There has been a very strong lobby by those driving school buses. Their frustration and their terrible fear at seeing children endangered by this kind of behaviour is well documented, and their frustration, as well as the frustration of the police, around the way the current law operates, where the driver has to be clearly identified, is a major problem.

We all know that it is going to be important for those who observe this behaviour to take very clear notes about the colour, the make and the size of the car, as well as the licence number, because we know the people who do this behaviour will likely fight in court against having their car identified. Particularly if they have not been driving themselves, that's to be expected.

It's going to be important for citizens who observe this kind of behaviour, for the drivers of school buses themselves, anyone who observes this behaviour, to be extraordinarily observant. Part of the public education around this bill is going to be to help citizens understand that to meet the requirement of the law it is going to be important to have very clear evidence that the particular vehicle is identified clearly.

Having said that, I think it is very fortunate that the provisions within the Highway Traffic Act that enable us to use the ownership of the vehicle to try and create



responsibility around this kind of behaviour remains in the law even though the policy for which it was developed, the photo-radar policy, has been suspended by this government. It is a necessary tool to ensure public safety, and particularly the safety of our young people who use school buses every day.

One of the issues of course for us is that with the moves of the current government, the suggestion that many school bus regimes may disappear and students may be on ordinary buses, where there is no provision for safety around getting off those buses, there are no flashing lights, is a worry.

I think as we go on and we talk about the grandiose ideas of the Who Does What commission around transportation issues for children, we are going to have to be very aware that we may lose some of the very safety aspects that already are in place and the ones that would be represented by this bill.

As we talk about it today, I sincerely hope that this House will support Bill 78 and that the government members will urge the government to bring this through committee very quickly so that it gets in place as quickly as possible.

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I'd like to respond to Mr Hoy's bill. Let me begin by saying this government shares Mr Hoy's concern about school bus safety, as these are the vehicles transporting this province's most precious cargo: our children.

Making our roads safer for all Ontarians is a priority with this government. When we announced our road safety plan more than a year ago, it included specific measures to design to improve school bus safety. These include improved training for school bus drivers and working with the Ministry of Education and Training putting road safety right into the school curriculum from kindergarten on up. We have always said that our plan is just the beginning. There is much more we can do and there is much we will do.

1020

We are always working to ensure school bus safety. For instance, the staff at the Ministry of Transportation participated in the review of the school bus standards conducted by the Canadian Standards Association last year. The ministry also continues to work closely with the Ontario school bus association to ensure industry practices remain consistent with legislation and ministry policy.

On a typical day in Ontario about 800,000 children ride a school bus that takes them to school and home again. By year's end, Ontario school buses will log some 350 million kilometres on our roads. Now, that's a long trip. In fact, it's the equivalent of about 8,700 trips around the world. Based on these statistics, Canada Transport tells us that children on school buses are 16 times safer than those travelling in any other form of vehicle. We also know from statistics that, on average, one child is killed each year while crossing the road after getting off a school bus and, on average, 10 are injured.

The loss of a child's life is tragic. It causes a void that cannot be filled. Even one death is one too many. For that reason, this government does not take school bus safety lightly. That is, we already have some of the

toughest legislation targeted at those who fail to stop for a school bus. In fact, one of the most serious offences under the Highway Traffic Act is the violation of the school bus stopping law.

Let me give you an example: When a driver is convicted of passing a bus while its lights are flashing and its stop arm is out, six demerit points are assigned to the driver's record. The only offence that carries more demerit points is failing to remain at the scene of a collision. As well, fines for failing to stop for a school bus are already among the highest for moving violations under the Highway Traffic Act. A first violation carries a fine of \$200 to \$1,000. A second offence within five years comes with a fine of \$500 to \$2,000. In some cases, the offender can be imprisoned for up to six months.

I share Mr Hoy's concern for this province's children. That's why the government stands behind its current position. That is, the person behind the wheel is and should be held responsible and accountable for their actions. We maintain that it is important to catch and charge the driver for failing to stop for a school bus — the driver, who may or may not be the owner of the vehicle. We believe we already have the system in place that deals with such offenders.

While it is true we have received letters of support for the member's bill, we received as well correspondence that was not supportive of the bill. Such a letter came in from the united counties of Prescott and Russell. It was not obvious at first why the municipality chose not to support the initiative. When we called to inquire, we were told that the reason was that the two councillors who moved the resolution believe it is the driver of the vehicle who should be held responsible for running a school bus stop sign.

I think all members would prefer that such offences not occur in the first place, rather than pin our hopes on an even higher fine, which may only be a deterrent after the fact. We already have very high fines for this offence, yet we still have over 500 offences a year. Maybe there is a better way. I believe that all the members appreciate and share Mr Hoy's interest in school bus safety and are grateful for his efforts. He has succeeded in raising the awareness of this issue, and that in itself is a success.

I believe that if it is the will of the Legislature that this bill receives second reading, the government will have to seriously consider incorporating his ideas into everything else it is doing for road safety. Meanwhile, our laws for school bus safety are clear: When the red lights start flashing and the stop arm comes out, traffic must stop in both directions. When school bus operators encounter problems with motorists failing to stop for the flashing red lights, they must contact police so that they can deal with the offenders at a local level. In 1994, 554 drivers were convicted of failing to stop for a school bus. I am pleased to say this figure dropped last year to 518.

I believe one of the most effective ways to prevent drivers from illegally passing school buses is through public awareness programs. For instance, local community groups have made great strides in increasing awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving, groups like MADD and SADD and others. In the same way, public



awareness programs can also go a long way to deter negative and dangerous driving behaviour like disregarding school bus laws. Parents, schools and local school bus operators can take simple but effective steps to increase driver awareness in their communities.

This government remains committed to ensuring the safety of our children. We maintain that we already have the right checks in place to deal with those who pass school buses through our current system of fines and demerit points. However, we can all do more in our communities to increase awareness and improve enforcement.

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** First of all, I would like to welcome our guests to the Legislature and congratulate the member for Essex-Kent for the amount of work that he has put into this Bill 78. As he explained in his opening remarks, a good amount of research has been put into the actual bill and the amendment to the Highway Traffic Act, and I think it's been done on behalf of the children that we've heard about so far and the children who will continue to use their school bus system in the province.

As well, I've heard from a good number of bus drivers and I've heard from a good number of owners and operators. This bill certainly has more public support and more attention than I have seen in many, many cases. They're all saying we need a better deterrent, better ways of putting those deterrents on to the driver of the vehicle, passing or illegally going by a school bus that is stopped, whether it be loading or unloading children. I think Bill 78 actually corrects a very long-standing problem and anything we can do to ensure the safety of our children has to be looked at very carefully.

I've seen mentioned a number of times that many communities have gone through what our guests have gone through today and have lost children when loading and unloading them. I'm sure we can all refer to examples in our own communities where this has certainly been the case.

I've received a good deal of correspondence on this particular issue, and I would just like to bring some of those views to the House today. As I indicated, a lot of the operators are strongly behind Mr Hoy's bill, and I'd just like to read from a letter from Powell's Service in Keewatin. They are a school bus operator in my riding.

They say: "The safety of our children and youth must be a top priority item at all times. When we have large groups of children, such as on school buses, this is even more critical."

They go on to say: "The role of our bus drivers is to drive the bus, not to be a traffic policeman. When students are entering and exiting the bus, the driver is watching for their safety. He or she is indeed watching the traffic around the bus ensuring that it is stopping etc, not memorizing a physical description of the driver. If the vehicle driver chooses to ignore the bus signal, the bus driver's concern is with the safety of the student, not the appearance of the vehicle driver."

"They make it very clear, particularly if the bus driver can and does get a vehicle licence number, but we are constantly told by the police that if we can't specifically identify the driver, we won't have a case."

"During 1996 to date, we've had at least six reported incidents of drivers ignoring the flashing bus lights and stop signs while children were either boarding or leaving one of our school buses. I've enclosed copies of the incident reports for your information."

They go on to say that any of these could have ended in a disastrous incident and end by saying, "Our company has a prime goal of providing a safe, efficient and on-time transportation service for our customers. We cannot continue to ensure this goal without this legislation."

That's from an operator.

I also have a letter here directed to me from the Kenora Board of Education asking that I support this bill and support Mr Hoy's efforts. It says:

"As the staff member with responsibility for student transportation, I urge you to support this bill when it is debated in the provincial Legislature this fall."

"In meeting with school bus operators and law enforcement officials earlier this year, I heard that it is very difficult to convict drivers who have ignored school bus warning signals. It is almost impossible for a school bus driver to obtain a vehicle description, licence plate number and particularly a description of the driver, while at the same time attending to the safety of our students in a dangerous situation."

"Allowing for the conviction of the owner of the vehicle instead of just the driver would bring a new level of accountability and encourage more responsible practices among drivers."

"Your support in addressing this important safety issue would be appreciated."

I certainly do support this. As I indicated, if there is anything we can do to ensure the safety of our children as they both board and depart from our school buses, I think we have to consider it very carefully. I am sure that when all members hear the arguments as put forth by the various members that are going to speak on this today that they too will see that very important need for addressing that safety issue.

I go back to the many calls I've had from parents, from drivers, from people that represent school boards, from transportation companies. They are all in support of Bill 78 and they are certainly in support of Mr Hoy's efforts. Again, I would just like to congratulate the member for bringing this forth to the House. I look forward to supporting this later this morning.

1030

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** First of all, I want to congratulate the member for Essex-Kent. I think he has brought forward a critically important issue for us. Obviously, anything that deals with our children and their safety has to be given the top priority of everyone in this House. I want to congratulate him for that. I would also hope, although I'm a little discouraged —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** I don't know why the backbench member of the Tories is heckling an issue of child safety. Perhaps if he'd listen a little he could show that he cares enough about this issue to pay attention. I'm not playing a partisan game here, I say to him. I'm talking about the safety of our children. I'm complimenting a colleague from another party for bringing forward what I think is



an important issue, and I'm sure you would want to reflect and respect that thought also.

Let me say I know the member for Essex-Kent has spoken to the local police service in my area, the Hamilton-Wentworth police service, and they've advised him that we have between 40 and 60 incidents per month in the Hamilton-Wentworth area, so certainly there's a local reality for me as there is for all of us in this House. I would hope the government would see its way clear to supporting this bill, allowing it to move forward. There obviously is a need to provide a deterrent.

I want to move quickly to what is probably the most difficult issue for some members, particularly on the government side, if the member for Oshawa's comments are any indication, that is, whether or not the owner of the vehicle or the driver should be responsible. I think that's a valid concern. It's an area that we want to enter into carefully, but I think it's fair to say we have already crossed that line in a couple of areas — minor, I agree, but the principle is already there. That is, if there's a parking ticket given to a vehicle, it doesn't matter who put the vehicle there; it's the owner of the vehicle. If you've lent it to someone who's been irresponsible and you can't get them to cough up the money, you're stuck with it.

Also, in regard to tolls that have to be paid, if you whiz by and don't pay it, again, it's the owner of the vehicle, not the driver, unless they can nab the driver on the spot. In our own photo-radar, which I know the government does not support, although I do think they'll see the light of day on that one, given enough time, again, we saw the principle that the owner of the vehicle was ultimately responsible.

Where we get into very serious charges, clearly at this stage in the evolution of our traffic laws we don't want to move into that, but in an area like this, when we see the number of accidents, the number of people who are killed with vehicles and when we're dealing with children, I think on balance it's fair to say this is a step worth taking and that it doesn't change radically the idea that the owner is still responsible.

What it really can do in effect is say to owners, those of us who own vehicles, you'd better be awfully careful who you lend a vehicle to, because you are lending someone what can be a dangerous piece of machinery. Certainly you can wreak havoc with a vehicle and the person who owns it and gives it to someone has to take some responsibility — not all, but I am comfortable with the idea that more and more we are saying to owners, "You are more and more responsible for what happens to that vehicle when you lend it."

As I've said, there are clear lines there and I don't want to see us race across those, but given the issue here, where we're talking about our children when they're away from home, they're in the care of someone else, as a parent I know that can be the most frightening time, when they're not in the immediate care of an immediate family member, they're now in the hands of someone else. This is exactly that situation and nothing is more potentially deadly to our children than when they're near the highway and near traffic.

In closing, I want to say I appreciate the comments from the member for Oshawa. I would hope they don't preclude government members from supporting this bill. I think the member for Essex-Kent is trying to in a non-partisan way advance the safety of our children and I think really this is something we can support. If nothing else, let's at least give it a further airing. If we're going to err, let's err on the side of the safety of our children. Let's have a further discussion. Support it today and get it into the system. I would urge members of the government to join with us in opposition in supporting the member for Essex-Kent's worthy bill. Thank you.

*Applause.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** I just want to remind the members in the gallery that you're most welcome in our House, except there are certain procedures. One of them is that you are not allowed to applaud.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I feel most privileged this morning to rise in support of this bill and I appreciate the opportunity. At the outset, I would like to congratulate the member for Essex-Kent for bringing forth this private member's bill. Frankly, I think it personifies the whole process of private members' business.

I would also, on behalf of this side of the House, like to extend our sympathy to the Marcuzzi family in the loss of their beloved daughter Ryan. I can only imagine how difficult it must be for you to be here this morning. I would like you to know that you have our heartfelt sympathy.

This bill, when I first heard about it, was a very easy bill for me to support, because anything we can do to save one life, as far as I'm concerned, is something we are obligated at least to try. I recognize that the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of Transportation has expressed some of the concerns of the government, and I appreciated very much that the member for Hamilton Centre recognized that it isn't easy. I know he recognizes that from his former position as Solicitor General. But it's the old axiom, I think, that anything worthwhile in life isn't always very easy and we have to do whatever we can to improve any situation it's possible for us to improve.

Frankly, some of the statistics that I'm now aware of in terms of the numbers of violations I find tremendously shocking; to know that there are school bus drivers who have said that illegal passing occurs at least twice on very shift. For those of us who are out on the streets and on the highways all the time in our cars, as all of us in this place are, I'm sure a month doesn't go by that we don't see at least one or two cars doing that. I always find it shocking when I see it. But now I hear that bus drivers say it's at least twice per shift, and you recognize that bus drivers are out on at least two shifts a day, sometimes three shifts, morning, noon and afternoon.

Yes, I recognize that these moving violations are difficult to deal with because it means that the car essentially gets the ticket. But it's about time, in my humble opinion, that drivers are made responsible for who drives their car. This came up a little bit in my drunk driving bill, from the standpoint that there was a discussion about



why you couldn't confiscate the car of someone who drove, under suspension, somebody else's car. I'm sorry, that's not a good enough excuse, in my opinion. If I loan my car to someone, it's up to me to know that that person is going to obey the Highway Traffic Act, and in this case, it's the Highway Traffic Act as it pertains to the protection of children who ride and board and get off school buses.

For somebody who drives while under suspension because they've driven drunk, it's the same thing: I have to know that that person I loaned my vehicle to is a licensed driver.

So I simply can't give any latitude to not supporting this bill because we have to prove who the driver is. Does it really matter who the driver is? The point is that that vehicle put children at risk. That's what matters. I say, with respect, that I believe that must matter to every single member in this House.

1040

If we say that a moving violation is difficult, and it's the same with speeding and how impossible it is for highways to be patrolled, particularly at high speed, or really any of our streets and roads where the cars are moving at high speed — the fact that you have to be able to identify the driver means that essentially you have to stop the vehicle.

I can only begin to imagine the helplessness that must be felt by our school bus drivers who sit there with their lights flashing, with their stop arms out and their children getting off that bus or crossing the road to get on the bus, and a car goes past them. It must be a horrific moment every time a school bus driver has to endure that.

I say simply, let's try some of the aspects of this bill. I think the increase in the fine is very significant. I shouldn't say "the increase." The establishment of fines is very significant. I couldn't believe that we don't have any fines now till I read it in the background. Somebody said, "If it's a leased car, how are the leasing companies going to deal with these infractions?" Well, I'm sorry, they'll have to deal with it the same way they deal with other infractions. Leased cars get parking tickets and other infractions all the time: not stopping at a stop sign, illegal turning manoeuvres.

I just don't have any sympathy for the argument that it's a leased car or the car owner isn't driving that vehicle. It's the vehicle that weighs 3,500 to 4,000 pounds. It's the vehicle that kills and maims children, with a driver at the wheel who does not obey the Highway Traffic Act as it is established, and that's what we have to get to.

If by supporting this bill and the government incorporating further road safety measures, which we are very optimistic they're going to bring forward in the spring, which of course I'm a little biased about because it will include the measures in my own drunk driving prevention legislation — then let's get on with it. Let's try it.

Frankly, I would be the first to be at the front of the court on the first case where an owner came in and said, "It was my car, but I wasn't driving it." I'm sorry, you own that car, you are responsible for it, and if you loan it to someone who is unlicensed or underage or impaired or doesn't obey the Highway Traffic Act in terms of the

protection of our children who ride on school buses in this province, it is on your head. It is your responsibility.

I will say again in closing that I think this is an excellent private member's bill. I think it demonstrates for all of us the effectiveness of private members' legislation. It gives us an opportunity in this chamber to bring forward concerns, and in this case, I would say to the member Mr Hoy, concerns that are shared around this province, not only in your riding. We thank you for bringing this legislation and we do commend you for it.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I'm privileged to be able to rise and speak in support of the private member's bill from the member for Essex-Kent and thank him for the work he's put into it.

The Marcuzzi family wouldn't know this, but the tone in this House is decidedly different from what it normally is during private members' hour. I think the seriousness with which you see the members of the Legislative Assembly at work this morning is an indication that we consider the tragedy, the real tragedy, that you experienced to be one that shouldn't have happened.

The private member's bill from the member for Essex-Kent hopefully will ensure that the one life that's lost per year is one too many, that the 10 injured children, on average, per year are 10 too many. Maybe in a small way, in a very small way, this legislative body can help you in the grieving and the healing process which you naturally have to go through.

Ladies and gentlemen, having spent 30 years in education, I know the value of teaching safety: teaching safety in the classroom, teaching safety on the school grounds, teaching bus transportation safety. Certainly the first thing that teachers and principals do in September is stress the importance of being responsible as a school bus rider. The carriers, the operators and the drivers of school buses are certainly well attuned to what their expectations are and in all cases, I think, exceed the expectations that parents have, that teachers have and that students require.

But you know what? No matter how much education we go through, we cannot control what someone who is irresponsible will do. Maybe then, punitive measures have to be taken. Although this may be viewed by some as being a violation of a civil liberty, I suggest to you that anyone who has lost a child has had their civil liberties violated for a lifetime.

I know, from listening to the comments from the member for Oshawa, the members of the opposition parties and in particular the message from the member for Mississauga South, we all do not want that to ever happen again. So I suggest to you that the fines are certainly proper, that the punishment is certainly in order, and that the owner of a vehicle has some responsibility for whom he or she lends a car to.

I canvassed several bus operators in the north and spoke to several bus drivers to see if the concern is a real concern on a daily basis. Ladies and gentlemen, I want you to understand that in fact it is. It's a concern that happens regularly, on a daily basis. There are some interesting facts that the bus drivers and the bus operators told me. It's not the car immediately behind the school bus that violates in most instances; it's usually the second or third car, the one that wants to speed up and try to get



by the school bus before the child leaves or the children leave the bus. It was interesting. When I asked them why it was that the car directly behind the school bus would stop but the second one is in most instances the violator, they said it's because the person in the second car believes he can beat the child across the road. That's where the tragedy occurs. I'm not sure if that is what happened with the Marcuzzi family, but we all know that the tragedy did occur.

There isn't a member in this Legislative Assembly who doesn't want to protect children. This is what this bill is all about. I know there isn't a member in this Legislative Assembly who would want to support this bill and then send it to the committee of the whole. I'm sure we all want to deal with this in a very responsible, very rational, very non-partisan way, because Mr and Mrs Marcuzzi are here today but there are several other parents who are still grieving because of the losses they've incurred. I commend the member for Essex-Kent.

1050

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** As the transportation critic for the New Democratic caucus, I would like to speak on this bill and to indicate up front that our caucus will be supporting this legislation.

We see this as a step in the right direction. We recognize that there is much more to be done on the question of highway safety and road safety, especially when it comes to the whole question of school transportation, but we see this bill as definitely a step in the right direction.

I'd like to take a couple of minutes just to go through it for the purpose of members who may not have had an opportunity to read through it. Simply, what the bill does, in the first part of the bill under section 1, is to make amendments to subsection 175(17) of the present Highway Traffic Act in order to be able to up the fines to the driver if the driver is convicted of having passed a school bus. That would be the first thing it does: It ups the fines that are currently found within the Highway Traffic Act.

The second thing it does is it brings a principle in that we had introduced as a government under photo-radar and under tolls legislation that basically says that if we don't know who the driver was because for whatever reason we were not able to identify the driver, the vehicle is then traced to the owner and the owner is charged. The simple reason for this is fairly apparent. If you go back to the owner and you charge the owner with the offence, it is more than likely that the owner will say who the driver was and then we can get to the person who really did it and be able to identify who the driver was who did the offence in the first place. What the bill does in order to do this is quite interesting and I think certainly clever: It puts the fine at double the rate of what it would be to the driver. In other words, if the driver is found guilty of an offence in the first part, he would be fined \$500. In the event that we can't find the driver and we go to the vehicle, the owner of the vehicle is fined \$1,000 for the first offence. The reason for that is fairly simple. We want to say: "Owner of the vehicle, cough up. Who's the driver?" We need to find out who the driver is because we need to be able to get to these people so that we can curb their driving habits, number one, and number two, make an example of them so that people take the respon-

sibility of driving more seriously and recognize that it is extremely dangerous and quite frankly lethal to be going on with this kind of practice.

The other thing that it does, in order to clarify from the civil libertarian side of things, is that you cannot charge the owner of the vehicle with — not "charge," but you can't imprison or put that person under probation because of the driver. The owner is protected from that.

So I think the bill is fairly sound. It's laid out in a fairly clear way and I think certainly is a step in the right direction. But I would call on the government for two things. We need to support this legislation, and I certainly hope we get unanimous support of this legislation today; second, that the bill is not sent to the committee of the whole, because if that happens, it means the bill is dead. What we're asking the government to do here is to send this back to a standing committee so that it can be dealt with properly and brought back into the House for royal assent at the end of this session or in the spring at the very latest. I would ask that we do it before Christmas.

The other thing that I ask the government is that I heard the comments of the parliamentary assistant saying, "Even though members vote for this bill at second reading and we do send it to a standing committee, it is possible that the government will never recall the bill and will wait for its own legislation," so that they can make changes in the Highway Traffic Act themselves. I'm not going to get into that and the politics of that, but I'm a bit cynical when I hear that. I would say to the parliamentary assistant, and I'm sure most members of the government would support me, that is not an option we should be following here. Allow this bill to pass, allow it to go to the standing committee and allow it to come back here and get third reading some time before Christmas and get royal assent by January 1.

The reason we need to do it is fairly clear. It's been laid out in this debate today. To do anything else but that, quite frankly, is a signal by the government that it's not going to move on this issue. I know that the backbenchers of the government are as concerned about this as the Liberal and New Democratic caucuses are and I would ask the backbenchers to support the opposition in this particular move because I am sure you've had to deal with in your constituencies the same kinds of concerns and the same types of issues we've had to deal with.

I just say to the family, my heart goes out to you. I fortunately have never had to live with what you have gone through and I certainly don't want to see any other family go through what you've had to, because no price can be paid in order to bring a child back when a child has been snatched away from us. To the family, condolences from the New Democratic caucus and the Liberal caucus and the Conservative caucus go out to you and we grieve with you because it is certainly a tragic event that should never have happened.

I say to the government in closing, the last part is that we need to go the next step, and that is towards public education about highway safety and public education specifically around school buses. It doesn't cost a whole bunch of money to be able to do ads that say this is a bad thing and this is what can happen, to heighten the awareness of what the consequences of passing school



buses will be. The price of that I think speaks volumes in that it's not a price too big to pay to save the life of a child.

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** In the 20 seconds remaining to me, I point out that civil liberty concerns reflected in this bill can be dealt with by committee and, on balance, I ask this House to support this bill.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I rise to commend my colleague the member for Essex Kent in putting forward this very important private member's bill today, a bill that's about children, a bill about the protection of children, a bill about safety. I represent a constituency which probably has one of the highest proportions of children riding school buses in Ontario. In the district of Manitoulin almost every child is bused either to public school or to the high school at West Bay. In the Espanola district, down the Highway 17 corridor, children are required to take school buses to get to school.

I have had over the years of representing Algoma-Manitoulin many complaints from school bus operators and drivers about the dangerous conditions that they see. I want to recount for you some of the problems that we see on Highway 17. On Highway 17, running between Espanola and Blind River, we have a large number of school buses. They are required to stop on a very busy provincial highway, a provincial highway dominated by logging trucks and other trucks that use that route on a daily basis to move the resources of Algoma-Manitoulin and the rest of the north to the mills and markets that are required.

One of the great difficulties we find is especially in the areas of the passing lanes, where there are three lanes of highway. For whatever reason, drivers in that section of highway don't seem to believe that there's a problem if you're in the oncoming lane — not in the passing lane but in the oncoming lane — where there are three lanes. I've had school bus drivers repeatedly tell me of difficult situations, very dangerous situations caused by drivers for some reason, confusion or whatever, about having to stop for that school bus. I think, ladies and gentlemen, we have to face the fact that this is an extremely serious situation, one that needs whatever this Legislature can do to correct it.

I have trouble understanding how this could be a problem, how people would not know they have to stop, how people would not recognize the seriousness of the situation. Yet we know, with existing legislation and with existing education, that it's still happening. So something has to be done.

Mr Hoy has come before us with a very reasonable measure, a measure that makes enforcement easier; a measure that has brought public awareness of this issue all across the province. That, in and of itself, is an important contribution. But each and every member of this Legislature needs to stand in their place at 12 noon today and demonstrate their commitment to the safety of children in this province by supporting Mr Hoy's bill. It is an act that will make a great difference to the people and children of Ontario. It is something that a private member has brought before this Legislature in a totally non-partisan way in order to protect our children.

Surely, following the passage of this bill today, we will send it to a committee so that any legal difficulties or whatever can be resolved and this bill will receive third reading and royal assent as quickly as possible so that the children of Ontario will have added protection.

1100

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Essex-Kent, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr Hoy:** I want to thank members on all sides of the House for their comments on Bill 78 and their very supportive comments. We're talking about the children of Ontario, 800,000 of them boarding school buses daily, some of them as young as five years old, who are hoping that people will stop behind the school buses when those red lights are flashing. They depend on it; their lives depend on it. However, we find out far too often that people are ignoring those signal lights and taking a very high risk, a dangerous chance and are passing school buses on a daily basis on a route-by-route basis. They're doing it in the morning hours and they're doing it in mid-afternoon, when those children are dependent on the security of the laws that we have before us.

The member for Oshawa talked about enforcement. Part of the problem with the existing legislation is it's difficult to enforce the law on those who pass school buses today. There has to be positive identification of the driver, which is most difficult at high rates of speed, people going 50 miles an hour passing school buses with abandon. Daylight hours may make it difficult to make positive identification of the driver; blacked-out windows, darkened windows on many cars today. More important, the bus driver is watching those children and preparing to move on to their next stop, and it's very difficult to identify the driver. Let's also state that the owner who would be liable here may have been the driver.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time allotted for the first ballot item has expired.

#### HEALTH CARE CONSENT AMENDMENT ACT (PARENTAL CONSULTATION), 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT LA LOI DE 1996 SUR LE CONSENTEMENT AUX SOINS DE SANTÉ (CONSULTATION PARENTALE)

Mr Klees moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 91, An Act to provide for parental consultation under the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 91, Loi prévoyant la consultation parentale aux termes de la Loi de 1996 sur le consentement aux soins de santé.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to standing order 96(c)(i), you have 10 minutes to make your presentation.

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** I would like to begin my remarks by stating very clearly that I believe the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, which this bill proposes to amend, is in many respects good legislation. I served as a member of the standing committee on administration of justice during the hearings on that particular act. As my colleagues know, during the course of those hearings there were a number of times when I expressed my concern that there was something missing in that act, namely, the involvement of parents when it



comes to important decisions regarding medical treatment for their children. So I don't think it comes as a surprise to my colleagues that I'm bringing this matter forward at this time.

During the course of those hearings a number of very strong arguments were brought forward encouraging the government to consider incorporating the involvement of parents in this act. It was not done at that time and I am hoping that my colleagues, as we debate this issue this morning, will support me in taking this particular initiative.

I'd like to share a number of facts which I believe are important to this debate and which I ask members to consider as they deliberate on this issue. First, I'd like to report that the vast majority of Ontarians whom I speak to are not aware in the first place that children in this province can receive medical treatment of any kind without the knowledge of their parents, the only condition being that the health practitioner believes in his or her mind that the child is capable of making a decision.

The reaction, when I discuss this with people across the province and in my constituency, is initially disbelief that this is the case in this province. The second reaction is indignation. Most parents in this province want to have an important role to play in the decisions around their children.

I'd like to make it very clear that this act is not about decisions relating to people who are adults in the course of their lives. This is about children who are under the age of 16. I believe, as I believe most parents in this province believe, that they not only should be involved in the decisions that relate to their children but have a responsibility to be involved.

My second objective in bringing this bill forward is to propose what I believe to be a very practical and reasonable legislative amendment that will address this particular issue. I can report that I've received expressions of support for this amendment from people across this province from varied religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. I've received expressions of support for this amendment from the health care community, from people who are involved in the day-to-day practice of medicine, who are saying to me, "This amendment makes good sense; this is good medical practice."

This bill before us today does a number of things that I believe are simply common sense. In the first place, this bill provides that prior to prescribing medical treatment for a child under the age of 16, it is incumbent upon the health practitioner to make reasonable effort to contact the parents, at least one parent, or an individual acting in the role of a parent, before attending to that medical practice.

It provides some exceptions because we realize that the family is not a perfect institution. While it is, without doubt, the most fundamental institution in our society, there are dysfunctional families. Parenting is not an easy task and we understand that there are familial circumstances where perhaps there is abuse, where there is the potential for abuse, and we have incorporated into this act exceptions under those circumstances to ensure that access to treatment and support for children who find themselves in abusive situations is not withheld.

This act does not in any way present a barrier to medical treatment to children under the age of 16. I want to clarify for the record, because there has been some misinformation in the debate that's taken place over the last couple of days, there has been some misinformation about what this bill would do. There are those who would say that it will in fact present a barrier to medical treatment for young children.

It does not in any way undermine the underlying Health Care Consent Act. Children of any age still have access to health care, and as long as the medical practitioner believes that the child is capable of making an informed decision, that medical treatment can proceed. What this act simply does is ask that same medical practitioner that, before proceeding with that medical treatment, the parents are consulted. I don't think that is too much to ask.

The bill as well makes exceptions for emergency treatment. We realize that there are circumstances when children will require medical treatment as a result of accident, emergencies. This in no way prohibits that from taking place, and the act makes exceptions for those circumstances.

The act also goes one step further, and that is that if the attending physician, the health care practitioner, has any reason whatsoever to believe that as a result of seeking consultation or seeking treatment there may be potential abuse within that family situation, again, there is exception for that under those circumstances.

1110

I'd like to clarify one thing. I believe it's in the interest of not only this House but in the interest of the people of this province that when we debate this issue this morning we deal with the facts. I'm disappointed that even this morning the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health distributed information to members that once again leaves in doubt the intent of the bill and the content of the bill.

Reference is made that research had been done by the ministry previously that relates to the age of consent. Colleagues, I ask you, as we debate this issue, let's debate it on fact, let's debate it on the content of the bill, which is not about an age of consent. This is about bringing parents into consultation when the important issues of medical treatment are being considered for their children.

I believe it's important that we put into place a completion of the legislative framework that on the one hand makes parents in this province legally obligated to provide for the care and the nurture of their children. Is it not appropriate at the same time, then, that we have something in law that ensures that those same parents who are legally obligated to provide for the care and nurture of their children also have the right to know what is going on in their lives so they can come alongside and provide the counsel, provide the care, provide the advice that any good parent in this province, I know, wants to provide?

That is what this is about, and it goes one step further because I believe, as I believe many of my colleagues and people in this province do, that the family is the cornerstone of our society. Over the years there have



been many attacks on the institution of the family, but in every generation there are those who must stand up and come to the defence of the family, and I believe this House today has an opportunity to take a stand for the institution of the family, its strength and the ongoing important relationship that must exist among the members of that family, and particularly between parents and children.

Let's not contribute to the alienation of parent from child by making it so easy for children to go their own way. Let's encourage them, through this act, to have dialogue, to enter into discussion with their parents on the important issues facing them.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this. I look forward to hearing from my colleagues on this important matter, and, please, I look forward to a factual discussion of this issue.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Orillia):** In the few minutes I have to participate in this debate, I've decided, rather than expressing my own concern and alarm not only as a member of this Legislature but as a former Minister of Health, to read into the record what those who share my concern have to say about this proposal. I would point out to members of the Legislature that many of these issues were canvassed during Bill 19. Mr Klees was a member of that committee, and I would point out to members of this House that he supported the government's Bill 19 proposals under the Health Care Consent Act, as I did.

On November 25, the council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons passed a motion strongly condemning Mr Klees's private member's Bill 91. They say:

"This is retrogressive legislation that would create havoc and limit access to birth control, treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, as well as pregnancy and abortion referrals. I am overwhelmed by the lack of sensitivity of this bill," said Dr Keith Macleod of Windsor, the mover of the motion at the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Many other members of that college, which is a public interest body of the self-governing profession of doctors in this province, had this to say:

"This bill is very disheartening and could result in real harm to adolescents because of their perception of the violation of the confidentiality of the doctor-patient relationship." This is from Dr Miriam Rossi, an active medical staff member of the division of adolescent medicine at the Hospital for Sick Children.

It was the Hospital for Sick Children that made a presentation before our committee on Bill 19 urging that something like this with an age restriction or a requirement for parents to be brought into the doctor-patient relationship not be included in the government's legislation or considered by the committee.

Another member of that council, Dr Don Braden of Kingston, had this to say: "This bill would totally negate the relationship of a psychiatrist to a youthful patient."

Dr David Walker, who is the associate dean of continuing medical education at Queen's University and a past president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, said, "This bill is nothing short of harmful, detrimental and dangerous."

I think that sums up the position of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. Frequently in this province we see that the CPSO, as they're referred to, and the Ontario Medical Association don't agree with each other, but on Mr Klees's bill this is what the Ontario Medical Association president had to say:

"This amendment will have profound consequences for the care of adolescents in Ontario. Not only does this amendment undermine the spirit and integrity of the Health Care Consent Act, it negates the tradition of medicine in this area which has evolved over hundreds of years. The effect of this amendment, if passed, will be to make health care inaccessible for adolescents who are seeking care in a host of areas, including family planning, counselling for family-related concerns and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases."

The president of the Ontario Medical Association goes on to say, "I find this amendment sadly ironic given your government's purported support for illness prevention and maintenance of wellness." He further concludes that Mr Klees's bill, as in this House today, "will show a callous disregard for the health and wellbeing of our youth." That from the president of the Ontario Medical Association.

This morning in my office I received from the Teen Health Centre in Windsor the following concerns:

"We want to express our alarm regarding Bill 91 and its amendment to the Health Care Consent Act. Our clients come to the centre seeking confidential care for very sensitive issues. These include family dysfunction issues, birth control information, eating disorders, gynaecological problems and concerns regarding sexually transmitted disease. It is our strong opinion that without the assurance of confidentiality they would not seek care.

"This bill would result in a giant step backwards in the treatment of our youth and have devastating consequences for their health and wellbeing. Adolescents will continue their high-risk behaviour but without the supervision or input of medical monitoring."

I present this evidence this morning because I believe this is the fact, that the importance of the doctor-patient relationship, the historical opportunity our professionals who work in the field with youth have, to judge the notion of whether they are able to make decisions for themselves and when it is appropriate to bring in family members in support of that child, is something we have always in this province considered a clinical judgement.

I will say to you that I do not believe the state should interfere with clinical judgements. I believe we have a responsibility to give our young people access to the care they need, free from fear. While it was some time ago that I was an adolescent myself, it was not so long ago that my own children were adolescents. I knew and understood their fears. While we always had a good and open relationship, I know there were some times they would want to be able to go and talk to somebody privately. I support their right to do that and I support the right for all youth and adolescents in this province to be able to seek care when they need it, without fear.

I do not support this bill.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I know, because I have had many discussions with the member who has brought this bill forward, that his real concern here is



about the relationship of children and parents and his concern that the current legislation destroys some of the trust and communication that he believes families ought to have. I think that is a really basic concern of his, and he believes, given his view of family, that that is a normal situation for families and that it is important to support that function of families.

I would suggest to the member that there isn't a member on this side who doesn't feel the same way. I can't imagine a situation where my child would need medical care where she wouldn't have talked to me. I have a personal experience in my family where my child came to me with a problem around sexual abuse and was able to talk to me, and we subsequently found out that her many cousins who had been similarly abused had not been able to talk to their parents about that problem.

1120

So I appreciate the feelings this member has about the importance of communication. I would say to him that I believe it is the job of all of us in our communities, all our supportive communities, our faith communities, within our own families, to do everything we can to build the level of trust and confidence between parents and children that allows a free and open discussion of any matter, whether it's a health care matter or anything else. That's a wish; it's not reality.

We know that the reality is that many, many children, both boys and girls, do not have that relationship with their parents and that very often the reason for that is that those children have been taken advantage of within the family or by close friends of the family. We know that those children have learned to keep secrets. We know that those children face people who are supposed to love and care for them and cannot share anything with them because their trust has been destroyed by those parents or by close family friends who they know are close to their parents and, however they try to tell their parents that something bad is going on, their parents don't believe them. This is a reality for such a large number of children.

The number of children who have been abused, according to the Rix Rogers study that was done for the federal government, is three out of four girls and seven out of 10 boys. That's a very high number. So what we have to look at is how we are going to ensure, as the member says, that where that sort of thing is a reality, a doctor is going to pick up on it and be able to say, "This isn't a problem."

Let me tell the member, having worked in the field of abuse for many, many years, physicians do not pick up on this. They are like all of us: They don't want to believe that this is going on. And they certainly don't want to believe they have to face a situation where they have to deal with a medical problem for their primary patient, who is the child, and the person implicated is the parent, who is also a patient. That's the reality in many of our cases. I had many, many clients who had tried to tell physicians about the problems they were facing within their families, and the physicians did not believe them and in fact told the parents what they had tried to say and children got punished even more. That's a reality.

While I appreciate and affirm the conviction this member has, and his wishes about what families were like, I don't think it's enough of a reality for us to trust the so-called safeguards he has in his bill. There are many young people who simply will not seek and will not get appropriate medical attention if a physician is required to consult with parents. It isn't a realistic wish; it isn't a wish that will result in the improvement in relations between parents and children that the member wants to achieve.

We will certainly be opposing this and we will be urging the member to withdraw this. It is clearly not something that is being supported by the health minister and the parliamentary assistant and, I would hope, by many of his own members because of the pitfalls in the bill. I would urge the member to work with the rest of us in this Legislature to try and find means to build that confidence and trust between parents and children in a way that makes his bill unnecessary, that makes it less and less common for children to want to seek medical care without the knowledge of their parents.

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** I would like to begin my talk this morning by saying one thing. Many of us in this caucus come together from very different backgrounds and we bring different life experiences to this House. I think that's what makes this House the place it is and what helps us to bring together, I think in some cases, superior laws and legislation.

I rise today because I feel very strongly about this legislation from a personal perspective. I believe that family values are the most important thing we have. Morals are the most important thing we can give to our children. But I believe in many cases that is not what happens. I believe with this bill today what we are going to do, even though Mr Klees says it is not this way, is limit and delay the access children will have to health care. I believe this because some children will not seek health care if they believe that their information will not be kept confidential.

The second reason I am very concerned is because of my life experience where I ran into a child who was abused. I truly believe that if she had been asked and had known that her parent at any time would be able to know what she was saying or have to be consulted with, there would have been a problem. In some cases that's a non-issue as we're talking about here, because if the child says he or she is abused, then the doctor doesn't have to consult. But in some cases, if the child wants to get a degree of confidentiality with the doctor first, he or she won't come forward and talk about abuse initially, so you have that consultation happening with the parent. I'm very concerned.

In the Health Care Consent Act one thing that I think is very important, and one of the fundamental things that wasn't brought out in Mr Klees's talk, was that a doctor has to assess capacity correctly. Mr Klees talked about that, but this means that the child or the person has to understand the information, which is the first thing that was said, but the second thing is that he or she has to be capable of understanding that information. That's very much different from just saying: "I want some help. I understand what I'm getting." To be able to understand



the consequences of getting that help is a major issue that I think health professionals and people around the community take up very carefully when they're considering the issue.

I must say that from the Ministry of Health's perspective the faxes are being flooded. We've had about 27 faxes in the last three or four days: 24 of them are concerned with the bill and three of them support Mr Klees. I'm sure he's had others on the other side who have supported him too. I just have three that I think are interesting that we have to talk about.

East York Health Unit:

"Parents have a role in providing their own sons and daughters with a framework of values on which to base decisions. In homes where there is open and frank discussion and commonly held values young people will seek parental guidance and support. In homes where this is not the case it is responsible for adolescents to seek the care they need even if they cannot discuss issues with parents.

"Legislating parental 'control' over access to health care will not improve the quality of parenting adolescents can expect, it will only deny care to adolescents who need it."

We have received information from the Hospital for Sick Children, which I believe is a guru in children's care, which is very concerned about this legislation; from the Association of Local Official Health Agencies; Yonge Street Mission, which takes care of kids on the streets who would be in some ways in very deep trouble with this legislation; chief medical officers of health; AIDS committees; public health officers.

I have one last letter which I think is important:

"Mr Frank Klees is proposing an amendment to the Health Care Consent Act. As a health care provider and mother of two teens, I oppose this amendment.... Youth under 16 years of age have many reasons why they do not involve their parents when they seek medical care. To insist that their parents be informed will cause many, many teens to avoid counselling and treatment for sexual-ity issues, drug use and many other concerns."

I think everybody has concerns and that we'll hear from many other people today.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I certainly appreciate the intent of the bill of my colleague. In a perfect world it would make some sense. The reality today is that we don't live in that perfect world, we don't live in a world where we have perfect families, where we have perfect relationships, where there is a type of nurturing, caring family relationship that many of us would like to see. The reality is that a lot of people are under some very difficult and different situations out there and we, as legislators, have to understand and be sensitive to the needs of all Ontarians and all the children of this province.

1130

This is not an issue of family values, this is not an issue of morality; it is simply an issue of health care for people under the age of 16. As the act now states, it leaves it to the judgement of the health practitioners, people we entrust with health care in this province. It is up to his or her judgement to make the decision whether

it is in the best interests of that individual, that young person, whether family members should be notified or whether there should be an attempt to notify a family member.

We're now turning it around and making it a mandatory situation. Therefore the issue becomes one of putting the notification of the family member ahead of the health care issue that person is dealing with, ahead of the treatment and counselling that may occur in that particular case. We're often dealing with situations with kids who are on the street. We are dealing with 14- or 15-year-old kids who often do not have a stable relationship with family members at home, who often are more fearful of the parent finding out why they're seeking treatment than of the illness, or of the treatment they're seeking. That is the reality of what you're dealing with out there.

You have myriad issues with young people — suicide, psychiatric illnesses, sexual orientation, drug use — extremely sensitive and difficult issues that many young people may feel much more comfortable speaking about to a family practitioner or health care counsellor than to their family, their parents. We're going to drive these problems underground. What you're going to say to the 14- or 15-year-old person who happened to be living on the street is, "If you're afraid that you may have been exposed to HIV," as an example, "you don't go forward and get tested for HIV," because of the fear of finding out.

What is the net result of that? What do we achieve by forcing that 14- or 15-year-old not to access that testing? What do we achieve by forcing the 14- or 15-year-old who may have problems with drug use not to access counselling or treatment? We're making what is a problem that may be treatable, that may be curable, into a problem that a year or two or three down the line may be beyond that stage. I think we have to understand very clearly that our first priority in this area must be care and treatment. It is not our job as legislators to make moral value judgements on accessibility of health care.

There are organizations that deal with young people that have expressed tremendous concern. Some have been read into the record by my colleagues from all three political parties in the House. I think if we allow this to happen we are taking health care, the treatment of young people in Ontario, back 40, 50 years. We are trying to bring us back to a world that doesn't exist any more. There's a new reality, whether we like it or not, and as legislators I believe we have to be aware of that.

In some of the work I have done I have dealt with 14- and 15-year-old kids who have had some tremendous problems, some real difficulties. As I said earlier, it was a bigger fear of their parents finding out the difficulty or the struggle they were having or the decision they were trying to make than of actually what the situation, difficult as it was, may have been at that time.

I am not sure how you tell 15-year-old kids who unfortunately are living on Yonge Street, in a blanket and maybe a couple of cardboard boxes, that to access medical treatment they would have to somehow track down, or make an attempt to track down, parents they may not have seen for a period of time or guardians who may not exist or individuals in their lives who may have



done nothing more than abuse them and scar them for life. To force that prior to getting treatment I think is irresponsible. I think it's taking away the judgements that family practitioners, physicians, can make today.

I would urge this House to reject this bill. I think it is one of the most regressive pieces of legislation we have seen from the point of view of health care in Ontario and I think the message we're sending out very clearly to health care practitioners is that we don't trust their judgement. The message we're sending out to young people is: "Don't access medical treatment if you're afraid of your parents finding out. Don't access counselling." What you end up with is more kids on the street. What you end up with is more kids using drugs. What you end up with is more kids being exposed to situations that are risky and possibly putting their life at risk as a result of being afraid to seek treatment. As a legislator, I certainly don't want any part of that.

I believe we have a responsibility to encourage prevention, to encourage issues of safer sex, to encourage young people to get as much information as possible when dealing with a situation, but most of all to ensure that young people in this province have full and unhindered access to health care whether they are 12, 14, 16 or 20. Frankly, this will take that right away. I want absolutely no part of that.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** As a parent, I think I understand the motivation behind Mr Klees's resolution today. I would say that certainly all parents, both in this House and outside the House, would wish that their children feel safe enough, cherished enough, trusted enough, secure enough to be able to go to their parents and discuss very personal and delicate issues with their parents.

I certainly know from my personal experience with a wonderful young woman who is now 22 and a young parent herself. I think the whole world knows that she had a very difficult adolescence and of our struggles. I'm proud and happy to say, I think partially because of the love and security that she got as a young child, she came through. She went through a very, very difficult time and is now just a wonderful, mature human being whom I'm very proud of: back in school, a wonderful parent herself. But she did have a very difficult adolescence.

She was able to come to me, and I'm so happy about that. I'm sure there are secrets she has that I'll probably never know about. Who in this House today who can remember anything about their adolescence — I know it's getting harder and harder for some of us to reach back that far. Who among us, though, can't think back to some secrets we have kept from our parents over time? But my daughter was able to come to me on several occasions and discuss some of the situations she found herself in, particularly during the time when she did run away from home and was on the street for a while. I had to go to Vancouver and track her down; again, a nice happy ending. I actually found her on the street and brought her home.

I guess I could go on for a long time about my relationship with my daughter, but I'm bringing her up because I met a lot of her friends during that time who for a variety of reasons were not able to go and talk to

their parents. God knows I'm not saying I was a perfect parent, but I do know that she knew that she wouldn't be beaten. She knew that she wouldn't be verbally abused. She knew that other family members wouldn't be verbally abused and blamed. She knew that if she came to me, she was safe and we could discuss problems and try to work them out together.

Some of her friends did not have that option. They knew that they would be beaten or thrown out of their home, if they weren't street kids but in very precarious situations. These children, these young people, if they find themselves — and let's get frank here; no pun intended. If young girls find themselves pregnant or thinking that they may have a sexually transmitted disease and they come from an environment where they don't feel safe to discuss this with their parents, and if there's any chance whatsoever that they go to any kind of health care person to discuss their problems — I understand that Mr Klees in his bill is honestly trying to work with that and find a solution, but unfortunately there is still the chance that that child will not be absolutely assured of confidentiality, and I can assure you that in some circumstances that would be enough for that child to not take the risk.

1140

While we're speaking candidly here, I'll tell you what some of my greatest fears are, because I agree with my colleague from Hamilton that this is not about family values; this is not about morals. This is about health care. I have grave concerns that we're going to find very young girls having illegal abortions because they will be too afraid to go through the proper channels, that there will be more cases of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, and that these children will end up in very, very risky situations because of their fear of being found out by their families and punished.

Speaking again as a parent, I would say that I certainly understand, Mr Klees, that you as a parent — I don't know you and I don't know your relationship with your children, but I trust that it's a good one and you feel confident that your children would come and discuss problems with you. Or perhaps you don't — I don't know — and you'd like to make sure there's some legal means by which they'd have to. I'm not sure. But I understand what you're trying to do here, and that is to give parents the right to know what is happening with their young children. I understand that. I certainly would not like to think that my daughter would have gone off and, for instance, had an abortion or gone through something like that without me knowing about it, if for no other reason, in my case, than to support her through it. I think all parents would agree that is the ideal situation. But that is not the ideal situation, sadly. There are many reasons why our children can't go to their parents and in some cases, I suppose, won't go to their parents, even if they do come from a secure, generally safe family situation.

I think that when you are getting the kinds of letters and responses from the health care community and those who work with youth, it seems like it's pretty unanimous in terms of the concern by the health care community about the implications a bill like this could have on



children. I know that when we were in government, this was an issue when we were changing some things in the Health Care Consent Act. Certainly you always have to weigh the balance between the parents' right to know, the parents' rights to take care of their children and be involved in their choices, with real concerns about children's need for confidentiality when it comes to health care.

I believe this bill is playing with fire. I believe it is a very, very dangerous step backwards. I believe Mr Klees is sincere in his approach and what he's trying to do, but I believe it is misguided and is trying to put his perception of what family life should be in an ideal world into one little box and saying it's got to be like that for everybody. And that's wrong, because it isn't like that.

I am not going to be supporting this bill, and I hope very much — I understand that the health minister, and the parliamentary assistant has already spoken, is not supporting this bill, I think for the same reasons many of us in this House are not supporting it.

I'm not supporting it because I believe that, in the words of a doctor from the Hospital for Sick Children, it is harmful and detrimental. I don't know who said that, if it was the president of the Ontario Medical Association or somebody from the Hospital for Sick Children, but I know the kinds of mail and phone calls that many of us have received on this issue have made it very clear that this is not a partisan thing. It is not an issue that I believe any of us are debating in a partisan way. I believe we are listening carefully to the health care community out there and people who work with young people, those who are expressing concerns about the long-term implication of a bill like this.

I suppose that what I would recommend on the basis of what we've heard is that the bill actually be withdrawn, because I think some very convincing arguments have been made today from all sides of the House why this bill couldn't possibly work and would actually be harmful to children.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I am rising in support of Bill 91. I could give you my personal reasons but I'm elected to represent my constituents and I believe that in supporting Bill 91 I am representing my constituents.

I guess the whole debate evolves around who is a minor child, and when is that person a minor child and when should they have all the freedom in the world to do whatever they want. It's a very, very interesting debate, because on the one hand, we say parents are legally bound for the care, nurturing, health and welfare of children until they're 16. Then we turn around and say, "Okay, we'll tie the parents' hands behind their backs when we're dealing with health issues."

I'm sorry, but you can't speak out of both sides of your mouth as a government in terms of legislation and say, "We're going to make you legally responsible for that child." Take education, for example. It's mandatory for children to be in school until they're 16 unless they have permission through the early school leaving provisions of the Education Act to leave prior to 16 with the consultation of the parents, the school and the child.

How is it on the one hand we say you must consult with the parent about whether a child stays in school, but on something that is probably even more important than whether they stay in school, the health issues for that child, we say you don't have to involve the parent? In this case, we must emphasize, we're not talking about the parent granting permission; we are simply talking about the right of that parent to know. When we talk about rights, I think it's very important that we talk about everybody's rights.

We criticize so many parents today in this world — and certainly our province is no different. We criticize parents for not fulfilling their rights and their responsibilities, and this legislation is simply saying for parents to fulfil their rights and their responsibilities as parents, let them know what is going on with their child. If the medical practitioner and the child decide that a certain form of treatment has to be executed, fine, but the point is the parent still has the right to know.

This bill is not about stopping anything; it's about information, and frankly, it's very interesting, because I've heard an example in my riding recently, about something as simple as a measles shot, and a child up to 16 now — and I agree most parents don't know about it and it's shocking to think that this is the fact — but a child now can go for treatment to a doctor who doesn't know that child, doesn't know the history of the child, and the child itself up until age 16 may not know all of its own history, and there may be a very important reason that a certain medical procedure should not be entered into for that child because of a medical procedure that happened when the child was very young. An allergy is very obvious, but procedures other than just allergies. So the doctor and the child enter into this treatment and that child may be incredibly at risk because nobody has informed the parent and given the parent the opportunity to say, "This in the history of my child's health."

1150

It's very difficult in the very short time we have this morning to try to emphasize why I am concerned on behalf of my constituents. I think if we're concerned about these few children in terms of them not seeking medical help, yes, I share that concern. I'm very concerned about the few who may not seek medical help because of their own fear of their parents. There is an exemption for that in this legislation and people are choosing to ignore that exemption, but I simply want to say while I share that concern for the few children, I really believe we can never design legislation that fits every concern. I have a concern for the majority of the children who, when they need medical help, also need their parents. Legislation has to be for the majority of children and we all have a responsibility to try to execute that kind of voting on this important bill.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** I have a limited time, but I want to get on record that when there was information regarding this private member's bill coming forward into the House, I received immediate phone calls from people from the riding of Windsor-Sandwich who really were stunned, I suppose, that anyone would bring this forward with so little thought and so little consultation.



I can honestly say that the thing that pleases me today is that the parliamentary assistant to the health minister who was here in the House to speak to this bill I assume is also speaking on behalf of the health minister and the health minister himself is opposed to this bill.

The ramifications of the introduction of this kind of bill are so widespread. I want to read in brief a letter from the Teen Health Centre that my colleagues have already alluded to. The Teen Health Centre deals with young people and knows this issue better than many of us in this House.

"This bill would result in a giant step backwards in the treatment of our youth and devastating consequences for their health and wellbeing. Adolescents will continue their high-risk behaviours, but without the supervision or input of medical monitoring.

"We strongly support the OMA's position that implementation of this amendment does not support either illness prevention nor the maintenance of wellness."

In closing, I must say there are areas we need to work on, in particular young people who deal with mental illness. In the case of mental illness with young people, parents do need to have a better way to deal with this situation in family so that if the member is trying to help in certain areas, there are areas that absolutely need to be addressed. We would encourage that there would be more thought given to those areas such as the area of mental illness.

We cannot support this bill. I am speaking for the people of Windsor-Sandwich and hope that everyone in the House too will not support this bill today.

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau):** First off, I'd like to commend my colleague from York-Mackenzie for bringing this matter forward. I think the level of debate on this issue has been exemplary and I think it was long overdue in this House on an issue such as this.

My point in speaking is not to convince anybody to my side, but just to outline and underline that second side of this particular issue. I have no criticism of anyone who doesn't agree with me on this issue and I recognize the value and I commend the member for London Centre for putting in capsule form the other side of that argument.

I agree with the member for Hamilton East that this is not a morals issue, this is not a religious conviction issue. I think it's more than a health issue, though. It's an issue of human rights and parental rights, and if we constantly erase the parental rights and increase the parental obligations, I think it's time to look at the ramifications of the actions which we're taking in issues where we have removed the right to know, a person's right to be informed.

I harken to the issue of the adoption act, where we indirectly allow the young mother not to name the putative father, notwithstanding the DNA testing that removes the risk in that issue. Twenty years later the child is looking for their roots; the mother is dead, the mother is gone. It's significant.

Let me tell you about a more significant issue, and that's the medical aspect of that. Ten years later, the 10-year-old child, searching for medical help, the bone marrow transplant, and there is no record of the father, no record of that family that could provide the assistance.

Why? To save some family grief is the argument. Well, let me tell you, the grief of that 10-year-old who can't be treated or can't be helped far exceeds the grief and the knowledge of the family of the putative father.

I could name you a situation I came across in my life on the bench of a young lady seven days before her wedding, engaged to be married to her half brother.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** What does that have to do with this bill?

**Mr Guzzo:** It has to do with this bill because it was a situation created because of the removal of the right to know, and that's what this issue is about.

**Ms Lankin:** No, it's not related. It's not related at all.

**Mr Guzzo:** In comparison in the criminal law, where we've moved under the YOA to treat people differently until they're 18 years of age, now we want to treat medically and provide additional rights and additional information? Where are we going if we continue on this particular route as we override the rights of individuals?

I suggest that a logical extension of this particular situation is in terms of religious rights under those medical situations where we are faced with a blood transfusion operation. Once again, the logical extension is to deny the parents and override their rights. At the present time we go to tremendous lengths and tremendous expense to protect those particular rights.

How much further, if we allow the medical association or the College of Physicians and Surgeons to dictate the avenue to be followed, before those particular operations and those particular procedures will see the waiving of the right of the parents in those particular circumstances to know? In every instance where we have taken that step and we have progressed, we have created individual situations — not many, mind you — where the harm created far exceeds the damage that would have been done by living up to the obligation to provide the information that rightfully belongs to the individuals in question.

Our caucus has had a beneficial debate on this and I commend the level of debate in this House. I think that issues such as this require the type of airing that we have enjoyed here, and I thank again the member for bringing it forward and allowing it to take place.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for York-Mackenzie, you have two minutes.

**Mr Klees:** I take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues for their contribution to this debate. Clearly, not everyone is in favour of my proposal, and I have a feeling that it may not be a unanimous vote in favour of this bill.

What I would like to point out is that contrary to a comment that was made by one of my colleagues, it is also not unanimous on the part of the health care field that this is not good legislation. I'd like to read from a letter written to me by Dr Linda Douville, who says, "As a family physician and as a parent, I am of the opinion that medical decisions involving the treatment of patients in this age group are best made in consultation with the patient and their parent or legal guardian."

I'd like to also read from a Dr Douglas K. Martin, who is a PhD in the field of bioethics with the University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics, who says the follow-



ing: "I have always considered that permitting children to be treated by health care practitioners without their parents' knowledge and permission to be a glaring departure from common wisdom and ethical prudence. I encourage the Ontario Legislature to support the Health Care Consent Amendment Act (Parental Consultation.)"

This is not — and I agree — about morality, it is not about family values, and I agree with my colleague Mr Guzzo that this is not simply about health care. This goes far beyond that. It goes to the principle of whether or not this Legislature is prepared to take an initiative to improve on the current reality that we have in this province and take action legislatively to set a new benchmark in this province as to the role of parents with their children, giving them an opportunity to participate in the very important decision-making process regarding their medical treatment.

I urge members of this House to consider this very seriously and to support this legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

#### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

##### LOI DE 1996

##### MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** We will deal first with ballot item number 51, standing in the name of Mr Hoy. If any members are opposed to a vote on this ballot item, will they please rise.

Mr Hoy has moved second reading of Bill 78, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 94(k), the bill is referred to the committee of the whole.

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** I would like the bill referred to the standing committee on resources development.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed that the bill should go to the resources development committee? Agreed.

#### HEALTH CARE CONSENT AMENDMENT ACT (PARENTAL CONSULTATION), 1996

##### LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT LA LOI DE 1996 SUR LE CONSENTEMENT AUX SOINS DE SANTÉ (CONSULTATION PARENTALE)

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** We will now deal with ballot item number 52, standing in the name of Mr Klees. If any members are opposed to a vote on this ballot item, would they please rise.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1202 to 1207.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Klees has moved second reading of Bill 91, An Act to provide for parental consultation under the Health Care Consent Act.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until your names are called.

#### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Guzzo, Garry J.	Shea, Derwyn
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Sheehan, Frank
Boushy, Dave	Hudak, Tim	Smith, Bruce
Brown, Jim	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, Ron	Stewart, R. Gary
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
Clement, Tony	Leadston, Gary L.	Vankoughnet, Bill
Fisher, Barbara	Marland, Margaret	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Ford, Douglas B.	Murdoch, Bill	Wood, Bob
Froese, Tom	O'Toole, John	Young, Terence H.
Gilchrist, Steve	Ouellette, Jerry J.	
Grimmett, Bill	Ross, Lillian	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed to this question will please rise and remain standing until your names are called.

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Flaherty, Jim	McLeod, Lyn
Arnott, Ted	Gerretsen, John	Miclash, Frank
Bartolucci, Rick	Grandmaître, Bernard	Munro, Julia
Bassett, Isabel	Gravelle, Michael	Parker, John L.
Boyd, Marion	Hoy, Pat	Patten, Richard
Brown, Michael A.	Johns, Helen	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, Elinor	Jordan, W. Leo	Preston, Peter
Churley, Marilyn	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Cooke, David S.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Saunderson, William
Cordiano, Joseph	Lankin, Frances	Sergio, Mario
Crozier, Bruce	Laughren, Floyd	Turnbull, David
Ecker, Janet	Leach, Al	Wilson, Jim

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 34, the nays are 42.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I will now leave the Chair and the House will resume at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1212 to 1330.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### SENIOR CITIZENS

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I rise today to present to the Premier a collection of several hundred petitions from the Alliance of Seniors to Protect Canada's Social Programs. The signatures on these petitions were collected at a forum representing a cross-section of seniors' groups. The petitions express the dismay that so many seniors feel when they witness the erosion of social programs and seniors' quality of life.

These seniors are becoming increasingly alarmed about the drastic cuts to pensions, health care, social services, education, Wheel-Trans and public transportation. Representatives of the alliance want you to know, Premier, that

they are discouraged that rather than live up to your promise of no user fees for health care, you have imposed user fees on prescription drugs and now seniors are facing a new fee of \$40 a day while in hospital awaiting placement in a nursing home or other institution. Most importantly, they are disappointed and disillusioned that you have broken a key election promise to protect Ontario's senior citizens.

I call upon the Premier and his ministers to review these petitions and reconsider their narrow-minded policies that are rapidly destroying the social programs which not only serve our seniors, but society as a whole. Indeed, to the Premier as well, why are you and your government —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

### PLANNING ACT AMENDMENTS

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I'd like to bring to the attention of members of the House an issue that has become quite hot in my riding. There is a planning process that many people know about with respect to the Greenwood lands, and in dispute is a proposed 2,000- to 3,000-seat teletheatre. Many citizens oppose this and they have taken their democratic right by appealing to the Ontario Municipal Board. But as a result of the Harris government's amendments to the Planning Act, their process has been threatened with early dismissal and with being charged the legal costs of the developer and the city.

In the Planning Act amendments, you said if an individual was not on record as having participated in the planning process either verbally or in written presentations, that could be grounds for early dismissal. In a community coalition and in large community meetings, lots of people participate in many different ways. The Coalition Against the Teletheatre has many individuals who are actually on record, but the individual citizen who volunteered to be the chair of this new coalition is not technically on record, and because her name appears on the appeal, the city of Toronto and the developer have taken steps to ask for early dismissal and charges.

This is an attack on the democratic right of citizens and it happens as a result of the anti-democratic provisions in the Planning Act amendments brought forward by the Harris government. We said at the time that this would be the result, that it would chill democratic participation by citizens. It's being proved true in my community, and I say shame on the Harris government.

### JOB CREATION

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** As you're aware, Mr Speaker, a leading goal of this government is to promote economic development and job creation. According to Statistics Canada labour force surveys, since the June 1995 election, under Harris government policies, employment in Ontario has increased by 127,000 net new jobs. I'm proud to report to the Legislature today a number of new employment opportunities and business developments that have been created in my riding of Muskoka-Georgian Bay.

Algonquin Industries, already a major employer in Huntsville, is expanding into the town of Gravenhurst and creating up to 100 new positions. A recent expansion at Panolam Industries of Huntsville has created an additional eight jobs. Two new 16,000-square-foot grocery stores are scheduled to open in my riding in the spring of 1997, one in Port Carling and the other in Bracebridge. It is estimated that they will create 50 new jobs. Eight new construction jobs were created in the building of a new 24-hour service station in southern Gravenhurst that will open this winter, and it will employ 10 to 15 people.

An undetermined number of new jobs will be created at the TRW seatbelt stamping plant in Midland, and the new Segwun by the Bay restaurant and marina will soon be under construction in Gravenhurst. Tembec Forest Products in Huntsville has recently hired an additional 20 full-time employees. Finally, the planned expansion of the Muskoka Nursing Home in Gravenhurst is expected to create 70 new jobs.

These new business developments and employment opportunities in Muskoka-Georgian Bay are solid evidence of the positive impact this government's policies are having in the province of Ontario.

### OMNIBUS LEGISLATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** Today I stand to commemorate the night that members of this Legislature supported me in the effort to stop this bully government in ramming through Bill 26, the bully bill that was an unprecedented power grab by this government.

The top 10 list of problems with Bill 26:

Number 10: The Minister of Health is closing and amalgamating hospitals and terminating services that individual hospitals provide.

Number 9: The Minister of Health has given the power to take over the operation of a community hospital by appointing hospital supervisors who will have all the powers of the hospital board.

Number 8: \$225 million in new user fees under the Ontario drug benefit program will be imposed on seniors and others most in need.

Number 7: Drug costs under the Ontario drug benefit program will no longer be regulated, leading to sharp increases in the price of prescription drugs.

Number 6: The Minister of Health gives power to unilaterally remove health care services from OHIP coverage, meaning these services will have to be paid for by the public.

Number 5: The government gives the power to unilaterally close down the public service pension plan and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union pension plan.

Number 4: The Minister of Municipal Affairs is using his new powers to amalgamate and dissolve the municipalities.

Number 3: There are restrictions on access of freedom of information requests by implementing new fees and providing greater powers to the government to keep files secret.

Number 2: In the past year the province has given the green light to over 1,000 new user fees.



The Number 1 reason that Mike Harris's government rammed through the bully bill: All of the above can be done without any discussion or debate or a vote in the Legislature.

### PLEA BARGAINING

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** On September 24 of this year in St Catharines, 14-year-old Jasmine Vanscoy was killed in her own home when a bullet from a stolen handgun tore through her head. Shortly afterwards, a 17-year-old male was arrested and charged with second-degree murder. That matter, of course, went before the courts.

I spoke with Karen Vanscoy, Jasmine's mother, yesterday. Karen Vanscoy is outraged, appalled and astonished that in a meeting at the crown attorney's office Monday of this week, she was told that a deal had been struck, a deal had been made. She was told that the offender would be pleading to manslaughter and there would be consent to a sentence of a mere two years in a young offenders facility.

It is astonishing and appalling that Ms Vanscoy, the mother of this slain child, would not have been actively involved in the consideration of plea bargaining of this nature. It's astonishing that the crown would not utilize its power to put before the courts the issue of whether this 17-year-old should indeed be treated as a young offender or as an adult. It's astonishing that a two-year sentence would be considered before any trial when the life of a young child has been so brutally taken.

I think all of us should share the outrage of Ms Vanscoy and the outrage of people across Niagara region who are witnessing what they perceive to be a gross miscarriage of justice and a denial of Ms Vanscoy and her dead daughter, a denial for them of the right to have the criminal justice system applied in their favour.

### EDUCATIONAL DONATION

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** In the 1996 budget, Finance Minister Ernie Eves introduced the student opportunity trust fund, which committed the government to matching dollar for dollar any public donation to higher education made by March 31, 1997.

Last week I was gratified to see a spectacular example of this initiative in action. It was all the more satisfying because it involved a great institution in my riding of St Andrew-St Patrick. The University of Toronto was the proud recipient of a \$3-million donation from the Bank of Montreal and its employees. This initiative is a direct result of the finance minister's budget announcement last spring.

I'm happy to inform the House that the government of Ontario will indeed match the Bank of Montreal's \$3-million donation with a \$3-million grant. To add to the good news, the University of Toronto will also contribute \$3 million to this initiative, for a grand total of \$9 million.

This is an excellent example of why we have introduced the student opportunity trust fund and of how it is working to help create more public-private partnerships so that we can serve the taxpayers of Ontario better.

I wish to congratulate the Bank of Montreal, its employees, the University of Toronto and its visionary president, Rob Prichard, for leading the way in turning fiscal restraint into an advantage.

1340

### ONTARIO FILM INDUSTRY

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to congratulate and honour the work of Ontario filmmakers, whose continuing efforts to give Ontarians an opportunity to see themselves, and to see their culture, on the big screen were handsomely rewarded last night at the 1996 Canadian Genie Awards.

While the eclectic mix of nominated films certainly offered up different takes of what cultural expression is all about, from the audacious *Crash* to the Ontario-made *Swann* to Bruce McDonald's *Hard Core Logo*, the Canadian filmmakers themselves are to be loudly applauded for setting new worldwide standards of film excellence.

Winning Ontario films and artists at this year's awards included best picture honours for Toronto-based filmmaker John Greyson's *Lillies*; David Cronenberg, best director for *Crash*; Ontario director David Wellington's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, which swept all the acting honours; composer Mark Korven for the score of *Curtis's Charm*; and the best first-feature award to Peter Wellington for *Joe's So Mean To Josephine*.

It should be noted that for all the success achieved by Canadian films last night, this Tory government has made the economically foolish decision to eliminate all funding for production financing and development programs through the Ontario Film Development Corp. The modest government support given to these programs, totalling \$9 million in 1995, went a long way in contributing to the continued success of the Ontario film industry. Indeed, it is sadly ironic that the last film to receive OFDC support under these programs was *Lillies*, last night's biggest winner.

### EARTH WORKS

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I rise in the House today to bring good news from my riding of Niagara South. At the recent International City/County Management Annual Conference in Washington, DC, the city of Port Colborne was presented with the award for program excellence for its outstanding citizen involvement in its Earth Works program.

Under the direction of Mayor Neal Schoen and Cecil Vincent, the chief administrator officer of Port Colborne, the Earth Works compost project was introduced to educate the public about the use of composting as an economically viable and environmentally responsible alternative to landfill organic waste.

Port Colborne's Earth Works program resulted in the diversion of approximately 789 metric tonnes of organic waste from landfills and a dramatic increase in industrial, commercial and institutional composting, and most importantly a sense of community and ownership among the citizens of Port Colborne.

I would like to congratulate the citizens of Port Colborne for its development of these successful strategies to encourage and enhance citizen participation in local government. Emphasizing citizen involvement, the good people of Port Colborne are leading the charge on innovative waste management. I would like to commend them today for their outstanding leadership and initiative.

#### VISITORS

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I'd like to welcome Mr King and the class of Mark Wilson, the hardest-working page here at Queen's Park, from the Caroline M. Thompson School in the gallery this afternoon. Joining them on behalf of Welland MPP Peter Kormos is Princess Elizabeth School of Welland. I'd like to welcome them to Queen's Park today.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I would like to take this time to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in our Speaker's gallery today the northwest regional chairs of the Federation Council of Russia. Welcome.

#### LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent today to pay tribute to the leader of the official opposition.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Do we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to the leader of the official opposition? Agreed.

**Hon David Johnson:** This is not a eulogy, of course. We're very delighted that while the member for Fort William will be entering a new part of her career, she'll still be with us in the time ahead.

I rise today on behalf of the Premier and the whole government and caucus members to pay tribute to the honourable member for Fort William on this, her last day in the House as the leader of the official opposition. I know that the Premier didn't have the opportunity to talk to you this morning and offer his personal congratulations. He certainly expressed to me last night his deep regret that he would be unable to be here today, something he had planned some long time ago, but he extended his best wishes on your service as the 20th leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario. I'd like to say a few words today as well.

It's always interesting that a political departure, whatever form it may take, is one of the few times we have the opportunity to say something nice and true about the members of this House, in particular our political opponents. I think it was Harry Truman a few years ago who said a statesman is a politician who has been dead for 10 or 15 years. This is certainly not the case today, and I would like to talk about the statesmanlike qualities of the member opposite.

While we've undoubtedly had the odd policy difference over the past 18 months or so since I've been on this side and the official leader has been on the other side, I believe you've always personally shown a great respect for this institution and the democratic ways of this institution and the process that allows us the free-flowing

exchange that I'll say we so often enjoy in this House, enjoy maybe more so outside of question period but enjoy considerably. You've been a very active, articulate, reliable, dependable member for your party, and I know you will continue to represent well the people of Fort William.

One of the characteristics I would like to comment on in particular, and I know that's shared by all the members, has been your strong dedication to your family. It's a dedication that is particularly laudable and notable in view of your responsibilities in leadership, not an easy situation. As someone who comes from a close-by riding to this complex of Queen's Park I have the opportunity to go home every night and spend the time with my family, but such is not the case particularly for a leader but indeed for many members of this House.

I know it's difficult for people such as yourself, Leader, and the Premier and other members who not only must entertain their duties in this House but then go home to their apartment here at Queen's Park, away from their family, and not have that comfort. I was thinking of you this morning while driving my daughter to school, which I do most mornings on my way down to Queen's Park. You don't have that sort of comfort, I suppose, on most days.

While I can't speak for the members of your family, I can say that to those of us who observed you in the House during your time as leader, you seem to bring very capable leadership to the Liberal Party, provide a very valued service to the people of Ontario and at the same time remain a very committed parent. That is an excellent combination.

I strongly suspect that maybe now Neil, Dana, Robin, Dara and Kristen will look forward to a few more hours from you, with the absence in your official capacity as leader allowing more of that time, which I'm sure you will value greatly.

It's said in history that political figures are remembered, and they're quite often remembered for one particular action or characteristic — Bill Davis maybe for his steady, solid leadership, John Robarts for his great love of the outdoors, and Mitch Hepburn for his willingness to take on the federal government and fight for Ontario, but what history will write about us we really don't know for sure. I guess we have to take the time and see what is written.

1350

But there are a number of things that could be written about the official Leader of the Opposition, many things, I'm sure. One perhaps will be most significant. You broke through one of the barriers that has existed for women in the province by assuming the official leadership of your party, a very significant contribution and action. In this light, at this time in our history, if I might be permitted to say it, in that context you may be considered as a revolutionary by the members of this House.

*Interjection.*

**Hon David Johnson:** That's stretching it too far, is it? For that you will, I believe, assume a prominent place in the history of our province, as the history continues to be written.



So to you, honourable leader, on behalf of our government, thank you for your committed service as leader of the official opposition, for your service over the years. I wish you nothing but good luck and happiness and success and all of those good things in the years that lie ahead as you continue to serve the people of Fort William.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** It's indeed an honour to recognize my colleague Lyn McLeod from the constituency of Fort William, who has worked so hard and so honourably as leader of her party. I want to say right off the bat that this is difficult for me. I have members of my own family who live in the constituency of Fort William and they actually broke from the faith to vote for Lyn McLeod, so this is not an easy time for me to give this recognition. I want Lyn to know I'm going to send them a copy of my remarks today in the hope this may bring them back to the faith.

Lyn McLeod is someone I have got to know well since 1987. We were elected in the same election, September 10, 1987. I went to the very back bench; Lyn McLeod went right into the cabinet. She went from being the Minister of Colleges and Universities to the cabinet post that everybody from northern Ontario wants, Minister of Natural Resources, and Minister of Energy. Then she went on to become leader of her party. So she has established quite a course in the time she has been a member of this Legislature, and one that I know everyone in Thunder Bay, not just her constituency of Fort William but everyone in Thunder Bay, is very proud of, and very proud of her.

Lyn McLeod, however, has been dedicated to public service long before being elected to this place. For 17 years she served as a trustee on the Lakehead Board of Education. For those of you who don't know something about the politics of Thunder Bay, for a long time you could describe the Thunder Bay board of education as the battle between two women: Lyn McLeod and someone named Evelyn Dodds. Thank God, Lyn is still active and Evelyn has gone on somewhere else.

Lyn, before you were elected to this place, I often would read the Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal and the Times-News and read about your exploits at the Lakehead Board of Education. It says something about someone's character, someone's stamina and someone's capacity to sustain themselves that you could be a trustee for 17 years and chair of the board for seven years, in particular under some of the circumstances in which you had to work. You are indeed dedicated to public service, and all of us are proud of you for that and proud of you for what you have done and what you have contributed.

I know Lyn McLeod in another way. We often get to ride on the same airplane that flies from Thunder Bay on Monday mornings and flies back to Thunder Bay on Thursday nights. We have had our share of announcements that say: "The flight is cancelled. Find yourself a hotel. The flight will not make it into Toronto today. How does London sound, or how does Ottawa sound?" We've had our share of being told that the Thunder Bay airport is closed for three days; not only that, the highways are closed for three days. And I might remark, that seems to have happened a lot in the last 16 months or so.

Lyn, I am happy that although you are stepping down as leader, I will continue to see you on those flights back and forth from Thunder Bay. I am happy that you're going to continue to sit as the MPP for Fort William. I know members of my family are very happy that you are going to continue to sit as the MPP for Fort William.

Please take from all of us our congratulations to you. Please take from all of the people of northwestern Ontario our congratulations to you. Everyone was proud of you when you became leader of the Liberal Party. Everyone in northwestern Ontario is proud of how hard you have worked, of how you have conducted yourself, and we are very proud to have you continue.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Indeed it is an honour for each one of us who has the opportunity to pay tribute to Lyn McLeod in her capacity as the leader of the official opposition and leader of the Ontario Liberal Party.

When you think of trying to get good candidates to run for public office, that is, people who are honest, people who have integrity, people who are trustworthy, you go around the province and try to encourage those people to become involved in the political process. Sometimes it's difficult, because it's a difficult decision to make, first of all to run for public office with the many sacrifices that are part of that, but even more so to run for political leadership. I know that those of us who have never decided to make a run for leadership sit almost in awe of those who will take that opportunity, who will work so very hard to achieve this, because it means an awful lot of sacrifice.

It is interesting and it was noted already that Lyn McLeod, when she became a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, was immediately placed in the cabinet and placed on the very important policies and priorities board of cabinet. I think that was a recognition of her talent, of her capability, of her intelligence, of her common sense, if I can use that word in the general context as opposed to a political context. All of us in the Liberal caucus have seen that perhaps more than others.

It is often said, when you speak to members of political parties, that they see in individuals who lead the party something that others don't. In this House we tend to be confrontational. That is part of the political process, particularly during question period and during debates where there are contentious issues. But throughout this exercise, Lyn McLeod has maintained her integrity, has maintained her honesty, has been seen, I think, as a truly decent person in politics.

There's a special sacrifice that Mr Johnson of the Conservative Party, the member for Don Mills, alluded to, and that sacrifice is even more for a northern member than for those of us who serve in the general area of Metropolitan Toronto. Lyn McLeod has a large family — large by today's standards I guess, Lyn, we would say — a very nice family, a family she's very close to. Yet being the member for Fort William means she has had to spend a lot of time, particularly as the leader of the official opposition and leader of the Liberal Party, away from her family and away from her own community. For any political leader, being from northwestern Ontario, an area where it's not easy to get to Toronto just



overnight or quickly, for a variety of reasons — Lyn has made that sacrifice, and certainly it is one we all recognize and pay tribute to her for having made.

1400

I was talking to one of the NDP members, Mr Cooke actually — he won't mind me mentioning it — the former House leader of the New Democratic Party. He mentioned, and I give him credit for this, because I know he was saying it in all sincerity, that one of the things he noticed about Lyn McLeod was how she became very familiar with pieces of legislation with which he was dealing. Not all of us do that to the same degree. Some can make a speech on virtually any piece of legislation and perhaps not be aware of all the intricate detail. Let me assure you that Lyn McLeod is an individual who can do exactly that; she becomes involved with the detail and the ramifications of legislation. That's important, because that means she's an excellent parliamentarian and I'm sure will continue to be so.

All of her life, Lyn McLeod has been about public service and looking after those who, in many cases, have been unable to fend for themselves. You will note — and biographies are interestingly written — but one part I picked out was that she had worked with troubled youth in the psychology department of the McKellar General Hospital in Thunder Bay. I think you gain some special insights when you work with people who require special assistance from others. Lyn has always, throughout her life, fought for those who required the assistance of those of us in public life. I know she has the respect of all members of the Legislative Assembly.

There was an allusion made to the fact that she was the first woman leader of the Liberal Party. While we like to look around the legislatures of this country and in other bodies and say that women have established themselves, have finally been accepted, have finally been appropriately recognized for the talents they have, Lyn McLeod is testimony to the fact that a person is able to rise to the top position within a political party and do an excellent job. She obviously would like to see many more women join that. In the fairly early days of politics, and we're still in the fairly early days if you look around legislatures, she has been one of the leaders in that direction, has brought credibility to the office of a leader of the official opposition.

Knowing Lyn as I do and as my colleagues do, I know that there is a persona, and a very sincere persona, which brings about confrontation in this House. But I know also of her special affection for all members of the House. She has that unique ability, and it's difficult for many of us, to deal harshly with the issues, toughly with the issues, but liking and respecting the people to whom she is directing her questions or her criticism. I think that speaks very well for Lyn McLeod.

Lyn, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, on behalf of all members of the House, because we've heard representatives of the other two parties indicate this, and I think on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario as a whole, we would like to express our appreciation to you for the service that you have provided as leader of the official opposition and leader of the Ontario Liberal Party.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** I won't pretend that this isn't a rather emotional moment for me, which also makes it a rather difficult one. I think my reputation for remaining cool in the Legislature has been established even longer than that of the government House leader.

There is a certain awkwardness, as the government House leader has noted, and as my colleague from Wilson Heights last night said as well, in the fact that the tributes are usually reserved for those who are leaving, and it is certainly my intention, as you have noted, to stay. The fact that I'm not retiring means that I'm also not going to seize this opportunity to indulge in a lengthy retrospective look at the past. I'm sure that comes as a relief to all members of the House as well as to you, Mr Speaker, because you've also, I'm sure, promised to indulge me when I ask my last lead questions a little bit later in the afternoon.

**The Speaker:** That was a secret.

**Mrs McLeod:** I just wanted to get it on the record before we begin. I do want to thank the government House leader and the leader of the third party for their very gracious remarks. Since I appreciate the awkwardness of paying tribute to a leader who is retiring from the leadership but not from the House, I will promise, on a point of principle, not to use any of your comments in my next election brochure.

I want to thank our House leader, Jim Bradley, for the remarks he's made on behalf of our caucus, and I want to take a moment to recognize the fact that there is no one whom the leader of a party works with more closely or is more dependent on than the House leader of that party. I want publicly, Jim, to express my appreciation to you for the knowledge you've brought to the job, for the judgement I've been able to count on, on a daily basis, and as well for Jim Bradley's very passionate commitment to the importance of what we do in this Legislature. I have appreciated that a great deal in the last months and years. I appreciate the fact, as well, if the House will bear with me for a moment, that Jim's words today are added, for me, to the words of my colleagues last night and their expressions of appreciation and support have moved me a great deal.

I am sorry that the Premier was not able to join us. Yes, he did call me earlier to express his regret that he couldn't be here. I guess the reason I'm sorry he's not able to be here is that Mike and I actually go back a long way. I've known Mike since about 20 years ago, when he picked me up.

*Interjections.*

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I'd speak a little more quickly, if I were you.

**Mrs McLeod:** I guess I'd better catch up to Alvin Curling's method of delivery and get through this and fly.

It was actually at the airport in North Bay. Mike was on the school board in Nipissing, and Nipissing school board was hosting a northern Ontario trustees' conference and Mike and I shared the responsibilities of school trustee in northern Ontario back then. I suspect it's possible that Mike might have had visions of premiership dancing in his mind even at that date, but I can assure you that I had no idea at that point in time that we would



be in these respective positions, because that was just before I left politics forever for the second time.

Howard Hampton and I, of course, as he has said, share ridings in northwestern Ontario. In fact, if the redistribution bill passes, as we suspect it might, we're actually going to share a riding. But that's going to be a story for another day.

There is a historical note or two that I want to add this afternoon. One is the fact that if the redistribution bill indeed passes I will be the last member to represent the historic riding of Fort William, and while I will continue to hold that post for the balance of the term, I did want to make note of it while I have this opportunity today.

I also want to make note of the fact that my leaving the leadership of our party today brings to an end a brief period, but I think a unique period that may not be repeated for some time, when the leaders of all three political parties are from northern Ontario. I feel a sense of pride in having been the first to have been elected leader of a party from northwestern Ontario. Howard, I'd forgotten in how many ways I had paved the way for you, first as Minister of Natural Resources and then as leader of a political party. I think I've earned those votes I got from your family member in the last election.

And I do feel a sense of pride and achievement, as others have noted, in having been the first woman to have been elected leader of a political party in the province of Ontario. Many of you have heard me speak, more than once, about the role of women in politics, so I will not go on at length today other than to say it is still my goal that someday it will be truly natural, as natural to have a woman in a leadership role in politics as it is to have a man, and indeed that it will be natural to have a woman in any role. I hope I have advanced the yardstick towards that goal to some degree.

1410

I want to take a moment to express my personal best wishes to each of the candidates for the leadership of our party. Each is a fine individual with tremendous potential for leadership. We've had an exciting leadership campaign and we're going to have a very exciting weekend, and I am ready to pledge my full support, my wholehearted support to the individual who is chosen as leader of our party this weekend.

I am trusting that the new leader will find some work for me to do. I know that one of the rewards for moving from leadership into the caucus role is that I get to spend hours and hours on committee work, so I've been in training on a voluntary basis for the last few weeks just to get some practice at it. I guess I've always been a person who preferred New Year's Day to New Year's Eve, so I'm already beginning to think about what tomorrow brings and what my new role can bring rather than dwelling on the past.

I would just like to conclude with a few words of thanks. A number of people have mentioned my family here this afternoon, and I think it's probably traditional to say thank you to your family when you're given an opportunity like this in politics. I think it's important, and I think it's particularly important when the family has been so closely involved with me in my political career, particularly in these last almost five years as leader.

I think all of us who are in politics know that the unconditional love and support that you get from your family is really critical to us, and it's the kind of love and support that you can only get from the people who love you.

But one of the unique things about my family is that they've also been very involved. They've been thoughtful and knowledgeable and sometimes challenging and concerned and truly actively involved in what I was doing, and I think that is truly a rare kind of support.

I think there can be difficult times for family members when their spouse or their mother is in such a public and often a very controversial role. I know they feel every criticism and feel rather helpless to do anything to deflect it or to change the way things work. I know they often have to struggle to have their own views recognized as being independent ones, even when they are as strongly opinionated as my own family members are, and they usually have to kind of hold back from expressing their own views in case it ends up being interpreted as the official position of the party that their particular mother or spouse represents. I know too that they are constantly called upon to explain or to defend or to interpret what it is their spouse or mother has done, and I know they worry about the kind of responsibility that can bring.

Having said all that, I am happy to report that my husband continues to be my greatest supporter and that after almost 30 years with a political mom, my daughters continue to be knowledgeable and concerned and involved. I am very appreciative of that.

I also want to thank those who have been my staff support over the last few years, and perhaps this is a little less traditional. But I think that unless you've been there, you can't possibly know the crazy hours of work and the incredible extra effort that political staffers put in. I know that every one of us who serves as a political representative is grateful for the kind of personal commitment and the loyalty that keeps our political staff going. I have been particularly blessed in that respect, and I just want to say a very sincere thank you to all those who have worked so very hard on my behalf.

Lastly, truly lastly, Mr Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to my colleagues, particularly those of my own caucus who have been so wonderfully supportive, if at times challenging, in the last years, but as well to members of all parties for the kind of support that often crosses party lines on issues where we share concerns.

As Jim has said, it's a confrontational kind of business we're in, and with the very confrontational nature of our work and the fact that we truly do hold very different views on many issues, as the government House leader has noted, sometimes I think that makes it very difficult to see the ways in which we actually do share concerns, but I think they are always there in the essence of who we are and why we're here.

I truly believe that we're here because we care, because we want to make a difference, we believe that what we do here actually does make a difference. It matters in people's lives, and so we make that commitment to be public representatives. We keep crazy schedules, some of us commute 1,000 miles a week in order to get to our jobs, and we go to countless events in our



communities so that we can understand what people need and want and what they're worried about and then we fight on their behalf for what we believe in and what we care about. Sometimes we get angry and sometimes the debate in this place gets rather passionate, and it is always and only because we are so deeply committed to what we're doing.

It has been a truly unique opportunity to be the leader of a political party in the province of Ontario. It has given me a chance to know and to appreciate the incredible strength and diversity of this province, of its people and of its communities. I know that the people and the places of Ontario are now so much a part of me that I suspect I will never lose the desire to fight for their wellbeing, and I will always believe that the work that we do here is important. Thank you very much.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker:** It's time for oral questions.

**Mr Bradley:** It's time to put on the gloves now.

**Mrs McLeod:** This is truly emotional.

**The Speaker:** That was a good segue, don't you think? The leader of the official opposition.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ECONOMIC STATEMENT

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** It's a little bit regrettable that in the absence of both the Premier and the Minister of Finance, my questions today must go to the government House leader who substitutes for them. It's regrettable after those kind words of support.

Minister, yesterday the chickens came home to roost for your government. Yesterday Ontarians learned what we have been saying all along, that your reckless tax scheme is a fraud, that it and it alone is destroying everything that is great in this province, from our schools to our hospitals. Yesterday Ontarians learned that Mike Harris's math just didn't work. They learned that you have to borrow and you have to cut even more to pay for your tax cut. They learned that you could not find the cuts without further damaging health care and education.

Your government has ripped this province apart and you're now finding that you can't put it back together again because you have no plan. Ontarians are suffering because you made an irresponsible promise during the last election: A \$6-billion giveaway that is now wreaking havoc in our schools, in our hospitals and in our homes.

Minister, we're one month away from the end of the year. School boards, municipalities, colleges and universities need to know what you're going to do. They need to know how much more you're going to cut to find the dollars for your tax scheme. When are you going to tell them?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** I'm a little at a loss as to where the fraud is here or where the regret is. Is there regret that through the course of the last year some 127,000 jobs have been created in this economy in Ontario, many of them I suspect as a

result of the fact that we now have a government committed to fiscal responsibility, a government which has committed to a tax reduction to allow people to keep more of their own hard-earned dollars in their pockets, to spend that money to create jobs in the economy? Is there regret that the economic forecasts for this province are indeed on the bright side and there's more economic growth projected in the future?

I think, contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition is saying, that we are spot on, as the former Treasurer says, and that in fact there's a great deal of optimism. I would say to the official leader, attend the economic statement of the finance minister this afternoon and I'm sure you will be receiving a great deal of —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mrs McLeod:** Let me tell you where the regret is. Let me tell you, for example, what your incompetence and your desperate cost cutting is doing just to our schools. The number of children in portables is at record levels. Thanks to your incompetence and your sheer mismanagement, class sizes across the province are going to unacceptable levels. Every day parents and students, teachers and principals are raising new concerns about what your cuts are doing to classroom education, just one of the promises that you have not kept in the last 18 months. Ontarians are suffering, the students are suffering because of this tax cut. That's what the cuts that you made last year are doing to education, and now we hear you may be planning to cut another \$800 million from schools to pay for that tax scheme.

1420

Minister, will you tell us how cutting more money from schools is going to help you keep that promise to protect classroom education? How will making students pay for your incompetence and your mismanagement make Ontario a better-educated province?

**Hon David Johnson:** If the member opposite wishes more details, then she should attend the economic statement in the committee this afternoon. This is a time-honoured tradition that Paul Martin, for example, Minister of Finance for the federal —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon David Johnson:** I'm merely pointing out that in the federal government, with which I'm sure the member opposite is acquainted, this is the traditional procedure, that these matters are discussed in the committee, and it will be discussed here.

But if the member opposite is concerned about the future, as we are, of our children in the province of Ontario, then look no further than the deficit and look no further than the debt that has been piled on this government, that has been piled on the people of Ontario and that is being piled in ever-increasing amounts on our children and our grandchildren. For the sake of the young people today, this government is coming to grips with —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mrs McLeod:** I don't think we're going to hear a whole lot this afternoon when the finance minister comes with his so-called update to the finance committee, because what we really want to know is what you're



going to do and whether you understand what you have already done.

Let me give you another example of what your incompetence has done to post-secondary education. In post-secondary education Ontario now ranks 10th out of 10 in this country. Thanks to your desperate need to find money for the tax scheme, we are spending less per student on post-secondary education than every other province in this country. We are dead last.

Thanks to the cuts you made last year to post-secondary education, community colleges across this province have now accumulated \$50 million in debt. They don't know what they are going to do if you have another round of cuts in store for them. That's the effect of the cuts you made last year, Minister, and now you're planning more.

Will you tell me how cutting and gutting Ontario's colleges and universities to finance your reckless tax scheme is going to actually make Ontario a more competitive province?

**Hon David Johnson:** The member opposite is speculating, crystal-balling, in terms of what might happen. I suggest that she attend the economic statement from the Minister of Finance this afternoon and she will be treated to the facts of the matter.

What this government is doing is planning a fiscal environment for this province that is sustainable, that will sustain the education that we need in the future, the secondary, the primary, the post-secondary education. Indeed, we are proud of the system we have. The system we have will be improved. There will be the financial wherewithal, and I'm sure that this afternoon the Minister of Finance will lay the foundation for that. I'd encourage the Leader of the Opposition to attend.

**Mrs McLeod:** My second question is also for the government House leader. I am already appalled at what I've been hearing from your government in the last 24 hours. Rather than be upfront and say you simply didn't know what you were doing 18 months ago and you still don't know what you're doing, yesterday we heard the Premier and we heard the finance minister just blame David Crombie for your delays in telling us where your cuts were going to come from next. You have the nerve to say that your announcements would come right after Mr Crombie makes his final report. Minister, you already know what you're going to cut. You just want to use David Crombie in a public relations charade designed to pretend that your cuts are coming from some kind of restructuring.

Why don't you just admit that it doesn't matter what David Crombie says, that it doesn't matter what anybody says? More cuts are coming and they are going to be deep. Why don't you just admit to people that they are going to have to pay for your tax scheme with deeper cuts to hospitals, schools, municipalities, colleges and universities?

**Hon David Johnson:** This government has said over and over again — I believe we're gaining more converts as the days go by and I hope we'll count the member opposite the official Leader of the Opposition in this regard — that nobody will pay for these tax cuts. These tax cuts will allow ordinary citizens, ordinary people, the

vast majority, ordinary citizens earning under \$60,000 a year, to keep some of their own money, the money they've earned, worked hard for. They will keep that money, which they deserve.

I might say that the income taxes in the province of Ontario are very high. The residents of Ontario deserve to keep more of their own money. They will then spend that money, invest it, create jobs and grow the economy. More people working will pay more taxes and the money will come into the consolidated revenue fund. Our tax cut will pay for itself this term.

**Mrs McLeod:** That answer means nothing at all to people who cannot get the health care they need in this province today. The next round of cuts you've promised has not even hit our hospitals yet and yet we see today that the number of people who are on waiting lists for cardiac care has now grown to record levels. Thanks to your incompetence and your desperate cost-cutting to fund your tax scheme, thousands of nurses are being laid off and people are not getting the care they need.

Day after day we are raising examples in this House of people who have been hurt by your health cuts. Thanks to your incompetence and your cost-cutting, we are now seeing that seniors are going to have to pay even new user fees, not only for their drugs but for their hospital stays.

Minister, that's the effect of the cuts you made last year. You cut that money before you found any real savings, and now your cuts and not quality patient care are driving your agenda. Will you admit that when it comes to health care you do not know what you're doing, that you don't understand the consequences of your cuts and that you don't care? Will you admit that quality health care has been sacrificed to pay for your tax scheme?

**Hon David Johnson:** What I will admit is that this government has pursued the policies we put to the people of Ontario before and during the last election: We would protect the health care envelope. Indeed this government has not only protected the health care envelope, which was \$17.4 billion in health care in this province of Ontario, but we have exceeded that promise. We have put forward \$17.7 billion for health care in Ontario this month. We have committed to investing some \$170 million into long-term care. We have a number of other investments in cardiac care and breast cancer detection, and on and on.

This government is committed to health care. We have exceeded our pledge in the election. We are investing in health care in Ontario because we consider it important.

**Mrs McLeod:** You never told people in the last election campaign that they wouldn't be able to get the health care they need. You did tell people that your cuts were not going to hurt classroom education.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** That was the big lie.

**Mrs McLeod:** You never told people that you were going to be so desperate to find money to pay for your tax cut up front that you were going to have to hit the most vulnerable people in this province over and over again. And you never told people — maybe it comes as a surprise to us all — that you were going to be so



desperate for money that you weren't going to be able to plan a single thing.

We have seen it over and over again. We have seen the disabled, the poor, seniors, we've seen women and children being hurt by your government's desire to cut first and ask questions later. The family support plan was cut before you had any plans in place to make sure that women and children were going to get the cheques they needed to pay the rent and put food on the table and maybe buy a Christmas gift this Christmas.

You closed the environment labs up in Thunder Bay before you found out that you were actually going to have to pay more to have the private sector do their tests. You haven't restructured a thing in 18 months. You couldn't restructure your way out of a paper bag. You don't plan, you don't consult, you don't manage, you just cut. Minister, why don't you just admit that you don't care about the impacts, that you don't want to know about the impacts, that you just want to cut to find the money for your tax scheme.

**Hon David Johnson:** What I will admit to and what people across the province of Ontario I am sure recognize is that this government put forward a platform before the last election and this government has stuck to it; it's lived up to its promises. We said we'd protect the elderly and the disabled on welfare. We've lived up to that promise. We've said we'd protect health care for the citizens of Ontario. Not only have we protected health care, we have put more money into health care. We have put \$300 million more into health care. We have promised \$170 million for long-term care. At the same time we said, in terms of the future of the province, we would come to grips with the deficit, which is adding to the debt of Ontario, which is mortgaging the future of our children and our grandchildren.

We are on track, and I'm sure that will be the indication from the economic statement this afternoon: that we are on track to eliminate that deficit this term and then to start paying down the debt.

1430

**The Speaker:** I would ask the member for Lake Nipigon to withdraw that previous comment that I heard.

**Mr Pouliot:** With respect, I'm searching long and hard, but if it suits your purpose, with high respect, sir, on a day like today I will withdraw, but I'm searching. What is it I said?

**The Speaker:** I feel fairly confident I heard you say, "That's the big lie." Could I ask you to withdraw that, please.

**Mr Pouliot:** The last campaign. I see.

**The Speaker:** I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you.

**Mr Pouliot:** I will indeed, sir, and go home and write it 100 times on a blackboard.

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much. New question.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Chair of Management Board as well. Yesterday both the Premier and the Minister of Finance stated that your economic statement was being put off due to delays in the Crombie report. Mr Crombie said point-blank this morning that he was delaying nothing, that his work is on schedule.

People across this province need some straight answers. People need to know how much hospitals are going to be cut, how much schools are going to be cut, how much municipalities are going to be cut and how many people are going to lose their jobs as a result of your government.

Minister, isn't it true that the sole reason for the delay in your economic statement is that to finance your phoney tax scheme for the wealthy you will have to make large cuts to education and you will have to download \$4 billion on to municipalities? Isn't that true?

**Hon David Johnson:** As this government has indicated over and over again, nobody will be paying for these tax cuts, in the sense that these tax cuts will generate economic growth and activity, along with a number of other measures, I might say, in terms of reducing the regulations and red tape that hinder job growth in Ontario. We will see that economic growth, we will see more people going back to work, we will see more taxpayers, we will see more revenue coming into Ontario and we will see the books of the province balanced in this term of government for the first time in many, many years.

There seems to be some idea that the economic statement is delayed, deferred, downgraded or whatever. This is a normal economic statement which will be issued this afternoon. I would encourage the leader of the third party to attend and listen and gain information from the tabling of the economic statement.

**Mr Hampton:** Not even the likes of Ronald Reagan believe that voodoo economic stuff any more. No one, not even Newt Gingrich, believes that giving a tax cut to the wealthy is going to benefit other people in society, and for this government to continue to preach that shows just how out of touch you are.

Yesterday we had evidence from your caucus meeting that your government is debating plans to cut another \$800 million from education. The Minister of Education, though given the opportunity to deny that on three occasions, didn't deny it. Now we know you're going to take financial control of education from school boards so that you can drive down teachers' wages and impose the cuts on education programs. But if you're going to take financial control of education off the property tax, then you're going to have to download another \$4 billion.

Minister, do you acknowledge that your government is planning to download the costs of ambulance services, child welfare and support for the disabled on to municipal taxpayers? Do you acknowledge that?

**Hon David Johnson:** The leader of the third party is speculating. What we have said all along is that we are looking at any number of alternatives to do exactly what municipalities have been asking us to do for many years: to disentangle, to decide which level of government is going to deliver which service.

This is a process initiated by the NDP when they were in government. This is a process the NDP touted to the high heavens. The NDP said: "Disentanglement. Decide which level of government should perform a service, which level of government should pay for a service." What happened? They failed. They could not deliver. This government is picking up the ball. This government is looking at all alternatives. Attend the economic state-



ment this afternoon. Perhaps you'll learn some of your answers.

**Mr Hampton:** Even George Orwell would describe this as going beyond doublespeak. I asked you a simple question, and frankly you had no response, so let me try again.

We know from a source inside your government that your phoney tax scheme for the wealthy is now pushing you into absurd downloading of costs on to municipalities. The list, we are told, includes moving welfare cost sharing from 80-20 — 80 province, 20 municipal — to 50-50; cost sharing of income support for the disabled on to a 50-50 basis — municipalities will have to pick up 50%; moving child care and child welfare to 50-50 — municipalities will have to pick up more; and downloading ambulance services, community health centres and even possibly assistive devices programs. Moving these programs on to municipalities is going to force municipal taxes up. Minister, I'm going to put it to you again: Are you denying that your government is considering these downloading options?

**Hon David Johnson:** I'll simply reiterate that when the leader was in government, the NDP government at that time said, "Let's look at a system which the municipalities have been requesting for many, many years." That system is to decide what services should be delivered by what level of government; shift the cost to that level. Some costs would shift to the province; some costs would shift to the municipalities. The delivery of those services would go along with it. That way there's greater accountability and there's greater efficiency and there is less cost to taxpayers.

This is the premise the leader of the third party and the NDP government undertook to satisfy. They failed. They tried, but they failed. They couldn't get the agreement. This government is picking up the ball. This government intends to be fiscally responsible. This government intends to work with the municipalities to establish exactly what they're looking at. We're looking at all alternatives, and I think at the end of the day the people of Ontario will be well served: more accountable government, less expensive government.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Can the members for Sudbury East, Cochrane North and Cochrane South come to order. Constant heckling — it's difficult to hear.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** When you get an answer like that —

**The Speaker:** I think the point I'm trying to make is quite clearly made there, member for Cochrane North. It's constant heckling. It's tough to hear the answer.

New question, third party.

**Mr Hampton:** The point we're trying to make is that the government should come clean with hospitals and municipalities about how deep the cuts are going to be, how big the downloading is going to be and about how many people are going to lose their jobs.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy. You have

had requests from environmentalists across this province to meet with you and you have refused, so today a large coalition of environmentalists went to your office and stood outside and waited for you to come out and meet with them. You didn't show. You are Minister of the Environment. Why won't you meet with environmentalists?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** My staff and my parliamentary assistant have been meeting with environmentalists.

1440

**Mr Hampton:** The environmentalists don't ask to meet with the minister's staff; they ask to meet with the minister. He is the elected one. He is the person who has the cabinet position. He is the one who is to be held accountable, and he refuses to meet with them.

Recently, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner made a special report to denounce your government's record. She said, "I am concerned that the government's sweeping changes to environmental safeguards are happening behind closed doors with minimum public consultation." Her report goes beyond showing how your government is moving too fast and ignoring the law. She says, "The Ministry of the Environment has been cutting back in air quality monitoring, laying off scientists and shutting down drinking water labs without paying any attention to what the effects might be on the environment or with respect to human health."

In view of the fact that your ministry is making all of these destructive cuts, why won't you meet with environmentalists to at least answer their questions and be held accountable?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** As I said before, I, my staff and my parliamentary assistant are meeting with environmentalists.

**Mr Hampton:** It was more than passing strange that a whole group of environmentalists representing people who are concerned about air quality, people who are concerned about water quality, people who are concerned about the privatization of our forests, people who are concerned about the fact that you've cut \$200 million from the ministry and you've laid off close to 800 people who do monitoring and testing, that all those people were there today and they all, to a one, say: "The Minister of Environment won't meet with us. The reason we're here today is we came to meet with him."

Minister, admit it. You look foolish trying to maintain that environmental protection will actually be enhanced by these cuts. Will you tell the people the truth? In order for the wealthy to get their 30% tax cut, the rest of us will have to give up protection of the environment. Will you at least tell the truth to people?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** This morning I met with the Recycling Council of Ontario and talked to many, many people involved with the environment, many environmentalists, at that point in time. I understand that this morning or around noon there were approximately 60 people in front of my offices when I was meeting with other people in this very building with regard to other matters that I'm responsible for. Many of the 60 people were members opposite in this Legislature. I thought it most appropriate that when we're discussing environment,



when we're dealing with environmental issues, dealing with primarily members of the Legislature from the third party, we do it in this place.

#### DEVELOPMENT CHARGES

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Your proposed development charges legislation has brought the city of Mississauga to a standstill. The mayor of that city, Hazel McCallion, says that you have caved in to the pressures of the development industry and are going to force local property taxpayers in growing cities to pay for new development rather than the developers. She says that your legislation is the most ridiculous, irresponsible legislation she has ever seen.

How can you justify this sellout of the property taxpayers of Mississauga and other cities like Vaughan and Markham just to make developers richer when your own Who Does What panel strongly recommended that you not interfere and allow the cities instead to decide the level of development charges?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I should point out to the member, in case he doesn't recognize this, that the developer doesn't pay; the home buyer pays. If you want to drive the price of houses out of the reach of the average potential home buyer in Ontario, that's fine. We don't. What we want to do is to ensure we put in a system that's fair and equitable to the municipalities and to the new home buyer so that new growth pays for growth but doesn't extract a ransom from the potential home buyer.

**Mr Colle:** I think my money's on the mayor of Mississauga. She says — this is Hazel speaking — "There won't be a house sold in Mississauga that will cost one nickel less if your legislation goes through."

Minister, your proposed legislation offloading development charges from developers on to property taxpayers has forced an unprecedented freeze on all development as of today. Before this chaos spreads throughout the 905, why don't you withdraw this sellout to the developers and come to your senses and realize that the property taxpayers will have to pay for your legislation either in higher property taxes or more user fees? Do the right thing. Admit that this is a blatant sellout and withdraw this legislation.

**Hon Mr Leach:** If the mayor of Mississauga has put a freeze on development in Mississauga, I'm quite confident that the people in Brampton and Vaughan and York and Durham will be pleased to have heard that.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Minister?

**Hon Mr Leach:** The bill that's before the House at the present time is intended to ensure that development charges pay for new growth. That's what this bill does and it does it in a way that's fair and equitable both to the municipality and to the new home buyer.

#### TRANSPORTATION FOR THE DISABLED

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Pearl Miller was here again today, and I'm very sure that you remem-

ber Pearl Miller. She'd be pretty hard to forget. Maybe, though, you weren't aware that her appeal has been denied and Pearl Miller has been cut off Wheel-Trans. Minister, Mrs Miller feels you duped her. A month ago you were only too eager, in front of all the cameras, to pull out all the stops to come to her aid, and now she's been cut off Wheel-Trans — and she's not the only one.

Your cuts mean that children with special needs lose out, because Freda Bryman has been cut off and she can't get to their school where she volunteered twice a week. Your cuts severely limit the health and independence of Trent Brady, who's recovering from a stroke and used Wheel-Trans to get to therapy. Your cuts mean Brenda Morris has had to quit a full-time job and reduce her hours to half-time because her son, who was born with cerebral palsy, autism and epilepsy, has been cut off Wheel-Trans. She has to stay home to look after him.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Ms Lankin:** Minister, these are your cuts. When are you going to take responsibility for them and for the people who are being cut off of Wheel-Trans because of them?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I have reiterated in this House all along that I am concerned about the mobility and accessibility needs of the disabled people in the province of Ontario, and I do have some concern about how some of these people might have been handled in the new approach through re-evaluation. But again I want to emphasize that while the ministry provides the funding for this support, we don't make that decision. It's clearly done by the Toronto Transit Commission and Metro. It is not a Harris government cut. I want to say it once more: We did not cut one dollar from disabled transit.

1450

**Ms Lankin:** Minister, please, please stop with the smoke and the mirrors. You assessed a cut to the TTC, a percentage based on conventional transit and a percentage based on special transit. You've rolled it all up into the \$8.17 million and said, "You can take it anywhere you want," but you've assessed that whole amount. You have not insisted that the special transit be maintained.

It's not just Toronto. You keep saying that it's only Toronto, that it is the only errant municipality. In London your cuts mean reduced service for everyone in Paratransit. In Ottawa your cuts mean tightened registration and prioritized booking. In Sault Ste Marie your cuts mean changes in who's eligible and increased fares. In Thunder Bay your cuts mean fewer vehicles and reduced hours of service. In Chatham your cuts mean eligibility changes; only one half of the riders are still registered. I could go on.

Your government promised in the Common Sense Revolution that "Aid to seniors and the disabled will not be cut."

**The Speaker:** Question, please.

**Ms Lankin:** These are broken promises. Real people like Mrs Miller are being hurt. When will you live up to your promises and restore this funding to special transit?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** The honourable member mentioned Wheel-Trans, and that is the reason I addressed the



Toronto Transit Commission and Metro, because the honourable member mentioned Wheel-Trans.

However, I have a letter that I wrote to Mr Paul Christie back in August 1995, clearly looking to work together in a cooperative way at how we can avoid these situations. I asked the Toronto Transit Commission to look at an operating reduction in their budget of \$8.17 million on a \$708-million budget. I further reiterated in my letter after the meeting, "I am prepared to instruct ministry staff to immediately make the necessary changes to give you the option of meeting the saving target entirely from the conventional transit and maintain Wheel-Trans funding at the same level."

### LOAN BROKERS

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. Some of my constituents from Durham East have been asking about loan brokers. My constituents are concerned because they feel that as citizens of Ontario they should be entitled to fair marketplace practices.

They have come to me to become informed about these so-called loan brokers. They hear that these people are ripping citizens off with what might be considered unfair business practices. My constituents say that these so-called loan brokers charge expensive upfront fees just for people to apply for a loan and then refuse the loan they have been promised, and then they refuse to return the fee they had paid. Minister, what is this government's position on these corrupt practices?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I thank the member for Durham East for the question. Our ministry is committed to protecting the consumers from unscrupulous loan brokers. There are many instances of illegal and unscrupulous activities where loan brokers quite often will not arrange to contact the lender, will not arrange a loan, and will not arrange to return that upfront or, as they call it, administrative fee when they have not been successful in obtaining a loan.

The act makes it illegal for anyone to obtain an upfront fee. We will consider any contravention of the Loan Brokers Act to be a serious offence, and we will continue to pursue these violations through enforcement activity and will not tolerate this type of activity for the consumers of Ontario. The ministry's marketplace services and standards branch is dedicated to identifying and protecting consumers from this type of scam.

**Mr O'Toole:** I'm pleased to hear that these upfront fees are illegal. What kind of success are you having in enforcing these laws on these unethical loan brokers who are taking advantage of unsuspecting customers?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** The ministry's investigation section has recently laid 42 charges of fraud under the Loan Brokers Act on October 25, 1996. We're actively pursuing numerous other investigations, including the execution of search warrants and commencement of court proceedings.

Our ministry is also currently monitoring in excess of 60 loan broker companies through the collection of complaints and other data from law enforcement agencies

such as the RCMP. The most important thing for the consumers to understand and to know is that it is illegal in Ontario to charge an upfront fee for a loan.

### OBSTETRICAL CARE

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** My question is for the Minister of Health. For several months now we've been asking you to negotiate with doctors in good faith because we have people in Ontario who desperately need care. Many of those are women in south-western Ontario, particularly Windsor, where we don't have people to deliver babies. Last week, in your last question that you attempted to answer, you said that was because the problem in Windsor has been going on for some time. "That's not this government's fault," you said. "We've had a shortage of obstetricians for many years now."

I'd like to know what you are doing for the women in Sarnia who are looking for obstetricians. They do not have too many or too few people to deliver babies in Sarnia. I'd like to know what you are doing for the women who are calling the member for Sarnia, Mr Boushy, and who are breathing down his neck, as he puts it, because they are desperate for care and they are pregnant.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** I would say to the honourable member that we are at the negotiating table with Ontario's doctors. The bargaining process is in place. Both sides are very serious about trying to come to an agreement. We had one agreement. It wasn't acceptable to Ontario's doctors. Therefore, we're trying to get another agreement together. I'd remind the honourable member that we've already invested in obstetrical care, in terms of last April, giving a 30% increase to any physician who delivers babies. We want to build upon that and try to come to an agreement with Ontario's doctors.

You said in your question there were enough obstetricians in that area. If they're slowing down their work now, we're at the bargaining table trying to solve those problems.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Minister, may I say that you have constantly tried to move the blame to someone else. The blame here clearly sits with the Minister of Health. You, sir, are responsible for the crisis in medical care in Ontario. Not only do Liberal caucus members feel this way but your Conservative members do as well. May I quote you the member for Sarnia: "He bashed the doctors when he shouldn't have. He created the bad feelings. Wilson broke a promise to doctors." It is not just Liberal members.

Today you have doctors from the southwest region here in the House. They are looking too, as we are, to see that you are doing your part to resolve the crisis. Women in Sarnia do not have care. Women in Windsor do not have care.

On September 25, we asked you — it's been two months now — "What do we do for women who are delivering in the US?" At that time you had prepared nothing. Two weeks ago we reported here that someone did deliver across in the United States. You have done nothing to prepare for that. I need to know, Minister, that



you are to blame and that you are rectifying the situation. We need obstetrical care in the southwest.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** We are working very hard to try to put in place solutions for the southwest, for Windsor-Essex. The negotiations are ongoing. We're going to solve, hopefully, or begin to solve in a serious way problems that were neglected during the entire time your party was in office, problems that festered during the entire time the NDP was in office. Every effort is being made to solve some of these historic concerns.

The reason some women have gone to the United States — they've gone there with prior approval and arrangements made by the Ministry of Health and local hospitals in Ontario — is because we're also making every effort to ensure that the women of this province receive the care they need. Again I would say to the honourable member that if there are specific cases, both the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Ministry of Health are available to help women find the care they need.

1500

#### SERVICE DE TRADUCTION TRANSLATION SERVICES

**M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) :** Ma question était pour le ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, mais puisqu'il n'est pas là, on va aller directement au président du Conseil des ministres.

On a appris dernièrement que dans les prochains jours votre gouvernement va aller en avant avec la privatisation du service de traduction à travers tous les ministères. On sait que deux tiers de tous les traducteurs du gouvernement de l'Ontario vont être mis à pied et que vous allez les remplacer avec des contracteurs privés.

Il y a des préoccupations à l'intérieur de la communauté francophone que, avec cette privatisation, il va y avoir personne dans les ministères capable de s'assurer que tous les documents qui sont présentement disponibles à la communauté francophone ne vont pas être traduits.

Êtes-vous capable de nous donner des assurances que tous les documents que le gouvernement donne présentement à la communauté francophone vont être là, même avec la privatisation ?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** Certainly my response to the member opposite is that this government fully intends to ensure that the translation services are up to the standards and beyond the standards that we have today.

The government has had to deal with the unfortunate fiscal situation, which it inherited a year and a half ago, of about \$100 billion in debt, deficits of some \$10 billion, \$12 billion a year in spending, and as a result, the government has looked for many, many ways of providing services, such as translation services, such as maintenance of the roads in the province, all the services at equal or better standards but at lower cost.

Yes, the translation services are being investigated in terms of using outsourcing, but I can assure the member opposite it's the government's intention that they be of excellent quality.

**M. Bisson :** On sait déjà présentement à l'intérieur des ministères que le gouvernement ne se pose pas sérieusement la question de traduction qu'il a besoin de prendre. Je sais que des documents qui dans le passé ont été établis et écrits en français pour les francophones aux conseils séparés de la province présentement sont envoyés en anglais où avant c'était donné en français.

Avec la privatisation, il va y avoir quasiment personne dans tous les ministères du gouvernement de l'Ontario qui pourrait regarder cette question-là puis militer pour les francophones à l'intérieur. Je vous dis encore que c'est important que dans l'intérieur des ministères il y ait du personnel non seulement pour faire de la traduction mais pour s'assurer que le gouvernement vit selon l'esprit de la Loi 8.

Je vous demande une autre fois — vous dites que vous allez l'assurer. Je vais vous demander la deuxième question : quant au ministre responsable des Affaires francophones, n'avez-vous pas à vous parler de cette question-là ? Est-ce que M. Noble Villeneuve est au cabinet pour militer pour les francophones sur cette question-là ?

**Hon David Johnson:** The minister responsible for francophone affairs is a very active and vocal voice at the cabinet table in terms of defending the rights of the francophone community. I can assure the member opposite of that.

I will say to the member opposite that even today some 63% of the translation is done by external suppliers and some 37% is done in-house. So even today a good deal of the services are contracted out. No final decisions have been made. This government is reviewing possibilities. We are reviewing possibilities all across the board in terms of delivering better services to the francophone community, to all the people of Ontario, but at reduced cost.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines. As the House is no doubt aware, the people of the north face many different challenges than the more populous areas in the south regarding development, employment and infrastructure.

With this in mind, I understand that the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp board is currently approving funding for projects in the north. Could the minister advise the House as to the status of this vital economic development tool?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I would like to thank the member for Halton North for the question. As I recently announced, the new board is up and running. They spent the summer working on new criteria, and I'm pleased to say that the northern Ontario heritage fund is open for business again.

Over the term of our government we'll be spending \$210 million in new dollars. This includes the \$60 million plus interest that was quietly taken out of the fund by the previous government, and that's part of the



commitment from the Premier and this government to northern Ontario.

**Mr Chudleigh:** I, as well as many of my constituents in Halton North, was shocked to learn that the previous NDP government had to write off over \$30 million in bad loans made to the heritage fund. How has this fund changed to prevent this situation from happening in the future and how can people apply for funding?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** The board's focus has been reoriented. I know this isn't as important —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I ask the member —

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Let's talk about the northern Ontario cancer treatment clinics, the wellness centres. Let's talk about the simulator.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I heard you were getting all kinds of phone calls.

**The Speaker:** Member for Cochrane South, I ask you to come to order, as well as the member for Sudbury.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** In answer to the question, the board's focus has been reoriented not to give direct business assistance to a particular company. It's divided into three broad categories to diversify and expand the economy of northern Ontario, including infrastructure, telecommunications and community support, to build a common ground that all individuals can participate in.

I'm proud to say that under these guidelines the board recently announced up to \$1 million approximately for their northern Ontario tourism association to market northern Ontario as a world-class destination for world travellers and people in Ontario.

As well, I'm pleased to announce up to \$6 million for the Sault Ste Marie locks to help their economy. Parties interested in applying, and this is open to all members of the House, I'd encourage to phone 1-800-461-8329 for how to apply.

#### PLEA BARGAINING

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a question for the Attorney General relating to the shooting of Jasmine Vanscoy of St Catharines. I've been contacted by representatives of her mother, Karen Vanscoy. Members of the House will recall that her 14-year-old daughter Jasmine was shot in the head with a stolen gun in her St Catharines home on September 24.

Mrs Vanscoy is very concerned that a plea bargain apparently has taken place. She has had a three-hour meeting with representatives of the office of the Attorney General, and she is very concerned that a plea bargain apparently has been struck for a two-year sentence for the individual who is alleged to have committed the crime and that she was not consulted in any meaningful way in this regard. I wonder if the Attorney General has anything to say about this circumstance.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I know the member is fully understanding of the fact that this is presently a case that is before the court and it would be inappropriate to make any comment about the case or the status of the

matter, and the issue will be spoken about in the courtroom.

The other thing I can tell the member — and again I know that he's supportive; he knows where the government stands on the issue of the Young Offenders Act. I know that his views in many respects parallel the views of the government in some of the changes we would like to see made to the Young Offenders Act, and I'd encourage the member to tell his federal colleagues that they should look at some of those changes and make some significant change to the Young Offenders Act.

**Mr Bradley:** There are a couple of issues involved in this, and one is certainly the Young Offenders Act. Another is the process of plea bargaining. I remember when the Homolka case was before the public. There were some recommendations, I believe, that were forthcoming after the Homolka case as to how plea bargaining should be dealt with in the future. Also, I know that the minister was kind enough to come down to St Catharines to announce the opening of an office in the Niagara Peninsula to assist victims of crime, and we're certainly all supportive of that.

I've been wondering how the recommendations that evolved from the Homolka case on plea bargaining would have been applied to this specific case where it appears that the charge is reduced from second-degree murder to manslaughter with a two-year sentence. This deal apparently is going to be finished by Monday. The concern of the mother is, first of all, about the speed it's going through; also the fact that she was not consulted; and third, it seems to fly in the face of the recommendations from the Homolka plea bargain.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Again, I can't comment on the specifics of the member's question. What I can tell the member is that there are procedures that are followed by crown attorneys. They adhere to those procedures very closely in issues of this type. I would assume a senior crown attorney who's dealing with this matter will follow those procedures.

1510

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I put a question to the minister responsible for women's issues and it too, as my colleague from St Catharines expressed concern, relates to the tragic taking of the life of young Jasmine Vanscoy. The Speaker has heard that Jasmine was killed when a bullet from a stolen handgun smashed through her head. A 17-year-old male was charged with second-degree murder. It's alleged that he was a boyfriend of young Jasmine.

Now the crown attorney, acting on behalf of the Attorney General, has agreed to a deal, plea bargaining such that the 17-year-old male killer can plead guilty to mere manslaughter and serve a mere two years in a young offender facility. Will the minister responsible for women's issues please tell us that she will intervene to ensure that justice is obtained for Jasmine and her surviving mother, Karen?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** I would want to refer that to the Attorney General in that we've both had these discussions and he's more prepared to answer the question than I am.



**The Speaker:** Minister, if you're going to refer a question, it's best that you just get up and refer it rather than going into any detail. Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As the member knows, this is a matter before the courts. The crown attorney will speak in the courtroom pertaining to any issues that exist with respect to this case.

**Mr Kormos:** Speaker, the Attorney General doesn't understand that his very own bill, Bill 23, purported to give victims of crimes rights and that he has denied Karen Vanscoy the very rights that are contained in his Bill 23: the right, among other things, to be actively involved in any discussions around plea bargaining. Ms Vanscoy was only informed after the fact and was told it was a done deal. Your own Victims' Bill of Rights has been violated, Attorney General. Why won't you act to ensure that Karen Vanscoy and her dead daughter, Jasmine, receive justice in our courts?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The senior crown attorney who is dealing with this is well aware of the requirements and well aware of the issues of law and I have no doubt will adequately deal with this case.

#### CASINO NIAGARA

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. As you know, Casino Niagara will soon be opening, and with Bill 75 finally passing, we also have some benefits for the Fort Erie Race Track.

I know many people from my riding, not just from Niagara Falls but from Fort Erie, Port Colborne and Wainfleet, will be working at Casino Niagara. People calling my office are wondering what the economic spinoffs should be to the Niagara region and also to the rest of Ontario. My question to the minister is, what can he tell us about the economic spinoffs so far from the existing casinos in Ontario?

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** There are very good statistics about the spinoffs from the existing two casinos in Ontario. As you know, there are two casinos in Windsor and they now employ more than 3,000 people. That has a spinoff effect of creating 11,000 jobs in Ontario. The provincial treasury is receiving on an estimated basis about \$350 million annually from the two Windsor casinos, which I think is a very substantial amount, and the Windsor-area municipalities have received about \$20 million.

Casino Rama, which is our newest casino, has an employment number of about 2,500 people and it also has a spinoff effect of about 6,000 jobs in Ontario. It's the largest commercial tourism attraction in central Ontario. It is very good news for those communities affected by our casinos.

**Mr Hudak:** That's certainly good news from the minister about Windsor and Rama and the effects on the rest of Ontario. As to my concerns for today for the Niagara region, Minister, what can you tell me about the clearly defined job and revenue benefits that we can expect in the Niagara Peninsula and the rest of Ontario from the opening of Casino Niagara?

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** In response to the supplementary question, I would like to say to the member for Niagara South that 3,000 people will be working in the casino in Niagara, and that is going to create 6,000 jobs in the Niagara Peninsula and a total of 9,000 jobs as a result of this throughout Ontario. The expected revenues are expected to exceed those revenues from the two Windsor casinos, which, I mentioned earlier, was about \$350 million annually. That is a large amount of money.

I would like to also mention, if I may, just at the last, some headlines which I think would encourage people in the Niagara Peninsula. They say that a Welland man is flushed with pride over the casino job he has obtained, that "Casino Deals Niagara Firms Great Opportunities," and that the welfare rolls have hit a five-year low in the Niagara region.

#### HIGHWAY SAFETY

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development. You will know that we've had a rash of accidents throughout northern Ontario. Winter came about three to four weeks ago to northern Ontario. Of particular concern was that two weeks ago east of Kenora, in the early morning, we had five transport trucks collide and end up in quite a mess out there. The following day I had a fireman into my office and he indicated to me that the OPP radio dispatcher phoned the fire department wanting to know if they knew how she could find a sanding truck to go to the accident site.

Do you think this is what northerners, northerners whom you represent, whom you're an advocate for, deserve when it comes to highway safety? Your minister keeps telling us that highway safety is a priority in your government.

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I'll take it to the Minister of Transportation to find out the details of that specific incident. I can tell you, though, that the Ministry of Transportation, with our ministry, has spent more money in northern Ontario on road construction and resurfacing to make the road safe this year. As well, I'll take it to the minister on this particular incident.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. We're right at the very end here. We'll let the minister respond.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I would just like to reiterate that that is unfortunate and I will take it to the Minister of Transportation to get the specifics and try to get the situation fixed.

#### MOTIONS

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** I believe we have the agreement of all parties relating to Bill 82, the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears



Enforcement Act. I see heads nodding. This afternoon we shall complete second reading of the bill. The bill will then be referred to the standing committee on administration of justice.

Next week, in addition to the regularly scheduled time, the committee shall meet to consider the bill following routine proceedings on Wednesday, December 4, 1996, and Thursday, December 5, 1996, until 9 pm to consider the bill for public hearings.

The committee will complete clause-by-clause consideration of the bill Monday, December 9, 1996. The committee will be authorized to meet beyond 6 pm on that day, if necessary, until consideration of clause-by-clause has been completed.

The third reading of the bill will be completed at 6 pm on the day that the bill is called as the first order.

I will now move the motions which result from our agreement.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** If that's what you want to do. I don't understand the procedure, but go ahead.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** We've agreed to agree.

**Hon David Johnson:** We've agreed to agree. I believe we have unanimous consent to move the following motion.

I move that the standing committee on administration of justice be authorized to meet following routine proceedings on Wednesday, December 4, 1996, and Thursday, December 5, 1996, until 9 pm for the purpose of consideration of Bill 82, An Act to establish the Family Responsibility Office, protect the interests of children and spouses through the strict enforcement of support orders while offering flexibility to responsible payors and make consequential amendments to certain statutes.

That's the first motion.

**The Speaker:** Agreed?

**Hon David Johnson:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** You have to get consent, though.

Mr Johnson moves that the standing committee on administration of justice be authorized —

**Interjection:** Dispense.

**The Speaker:** Dispense? Good. All agreed? Agreed.

**Hon David Johnson:** I believe we have unanimous consent that I move the following motion.

**The Speaker:** Do we have consent for the following motion by the government House Leader? Agreed.

**Hon David Johnson:** I move that the standing committee on administration of justice meet to complete clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 82 on Monday, December 9, 1996. All proposed amendments must be filed with the clerk of the committee prior to 12 noon on the abovenoted day. At 5 pm on that day, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further amendment or debate, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any divisions required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 128(a); and

That the committee be authorized to continue to meet beyond 6 pm on December 9, 1996, if necessary, until clause-by-clause consideration has been completed.

**The Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

1520

## PETITIONS

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I have a petition submitted by the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Resource Centre for Injured Workers that reads in part as follows:

"Whereas the Workers' Compensation Act is a vital protection for all workers in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Occupational Health and Safety Act has prevented untold numbers of accidents and saved thousands from illness and diseases;

"We, therefore, demand full public hearings throughout the province of Ontario on the Workers' Compensation Act proposed changes, and no changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, workers' right to refuse and joint health and safety committees."

This petition has been signed by 40 residents in my riding.

### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have hundreds of letters and petitions from students and teachers in my riding about the so-called reforms to the education system. Today I'm going to read you but one of those. The petition reads:

"Dear Mr Snobelen:

"In school I am on the soccer team, volleyball team, trying out for hockey and going to sign up for the swimming team and basketball team. I also love gym class. So if you cut our gym teacher, gym classes or gym equipment, then maybe I'll fail you instead of you failing other extracurricular programs."

This is from Gabriel Grant, age 10, grade 5.

### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr Bill Grimmer (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** I have a petition which, in accordance with standing order 36(b), I will summarize by saying that it's from the supporters of the Baysville Public Library and it expresses a concern about public libraries and public library boards. It's signed by approximately 45 of my constituents, and I file it today.

### SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the provincial government is planning to make significant changes to the delivery and governance of education in this province; and

"Whereas we, as parents, believe that school councils should play an important role in education with clearly defined responsibilities limited to their particular school communities; and

"Whereas we, as ratepayers, are extremely disturbed that consideration is being given to abolish school boards and eliminate decision-making by locally elected representatives;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the present structure of school boards within the province of Ontario continue to have a major role in governance of the schools to deal with broad policies as advocates for the students in their community, to provide cost-efficient educational services and to be directly accountable to the parents and local ratepayers."

In agreement with it, I add my signature.

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I have a petition to present from parents of over 3,500 students who were represented at a vigil yesterday, schools from Hawthorne, Winona, Hughes, Pauline, Palmerston, Gabrielle-Roy, St Sebastian, Regal Road, McMurrich. The petition reads simply:

"We, the undersigned, oppose the government of Ontario's cutbacks to public education funding."

I agree with that petition and I've affixed my name to it.

#### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas we believe that the provincial interest in public libraries in Ontario is fundamental to the rights of all Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to maintain the provincial interest in public libraries by ensuring the continuance of the following:

"(1) grants to ensure that all Ontarians have equalized access to library materials and services;

"(2) coordination of resource-sharing programs such as interlibrary loan and Internet access;

"(3) policy to ensure the future of the network of Ontario public libraries;

"(4) provincial assistance directly to libraries at the service level, for example, through Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Service-North;

"(5) legislation that maintains the autonomy of public library boards."

#### FIRE SAFETY

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is in response to Bill 84 and it's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the firefighters of Sudbury and Ontario are very concerned about Bill 84;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is unfair;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is discriminatory;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 endangers the wellbeing of the people of Ontario;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 requires extensive changes;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 needs broad provincial public hearings before implementation;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand the Solicitor General to rewrite Bill 84 before being enacted into law and only after extensive public hearings across Ontario."

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from the founding meeting of Deadbeat Government — Payors and Payees Unite, which was held on November 14. The co-chairs are Agnes Scheer and Marie Lafleur, and the petition reads as follows:

"Whereas Mike Harris and Charles Harnick promised to improve the family support program; and

"Whereas Mike Harris promised in the Common Sense Revolution that 'government should concentrate its efforts on tracking down deadbeat parents and enforcing payment orders'; and

"Whereas the cuts to the family support plan have eliminated community-based services, replaced enforcement staff with technology and limited communication; and

"Whereas Mike Harris has clearly broken his promise to provide better enforcement of support;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that Mike Harris reopen the regional offices and guarantee adequate staffing numbers to provide quality service to recipients and children. We also request a formal apology from Mike Harris and Charles Harnick for the manner in which the current system has handled our cases."

I would advise they're holding their second meeting this evening in Hamilton also and I add my name to theirs in support.

#### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we believe that the provincial interest in public libraries in Ontario is fundamental to the rights of all Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to maintain the provincial interest in public libraries by ensuring the continuance of the following:

"(1) grants to ensure that all Ontarians have equalized access to library materials and services;

"(2) coordination of resource-sharing programs such as interlibrary loan and Internet access;

"(3) policy to ensure the future of the network of Ontario public libraries;

"(4) provincial assistance directly to libraries at the service level, for example, through Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Service-North;

"(5) legislation that maintains the autonomy of public library boards."

It's signed by 225-plus members of my constituency, and I affix my signature.

#### EDUCATION ACCOMMODATION

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** I have a petition that was gathered by the chairperson of St Timothy's Catholic School Advisory Council, Mrs Therese MacNeil, and it reads as follows:



"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Education promised that cuts to education would not hurt the classroom;

"Whereas the cuts to education have resulted in many of our very young children being housed in inadequate, poorly ventilated portables;

"Whereas the children who are housed in portable classrooms that occupy crowded school yards are educationally at risk and their safety is in jeopardy;

"Whereas the current moratorium on capital expenditures makes it impossible for some school boards to provide safe, comfortable learning environments for our children, thus adversely affecting the quality of their education;

"Whereas the government of Ontario has proposed that \$250 million be spent on building a superjail while withholding funds for necessary school construction;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Remove the freeze on capital expenditures to ensure that our children are educated in buildings appropriate to and conducive of learning, comfort and safety."

I add my signature to this important petition.

1530

#### LAND-LEASE COMMUNITIES

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** It's a privilege today to stand and present a petition. I've received correspondence from a Mrs Ruth Hinkley and Phyllis Baker, who are from the Wilmot Creek Homeowners' Association in Newcastle, Ontario.

"To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Honourable Al Leach:

"The undersigned endorse the comments of the Wilmot Creek Homeowners' Association submission on tenant protection legislation, New Directions for Discussion. New Directions ignores the needs of an ever-increasing segment of society, ie, homeowners on leased-land communities. It proves that there is a need for separate legislation for land-lease communities."

I'm pleased to affix my name in support of this petition.

#### SOCIAL SERVICES

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I have a petition signed by hundreds of members from the Alliance for Seniors calling on both the provincial and federal government to ensure accessibility and affordability of post-secondary education, among many other things, to guarantee a high standard of universal health care coverage, to restore the funding for social assistance, maintain rent controls, eliminate drug user fees, establish programs to promote jobs, training and the retraining of workers and provide a public education system of lifelong learning.

I do concur with the contents of the petition, and I will affix my signature to it.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have petitions from hundreds of firefighters in Mississauga,

particularly Station 115, Station 119, Station 114, Station 108, Station 103, the inspection division, Station 110, Station 112, Station 106 and Station 104. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario; and

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear that they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

On behalf of my caucus colleagues, I add my name.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the administration of Families Against Deadbeats, Renate Diorio, Heinz Paul and Danielle McIsaac, are in total support of Bill 82, presented by the Honourable Charles Harnick to the Legislative Assembly on October 2, 1996, outlining the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, to replace the Family Support Plan Act, 1992; and

"Whereas the changes will relieve the taxpayers of Ontario and provide proper enforcement required to collect and administer child support payments and orders;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We support and agree with all of the changes outlined in the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, set forth by the Honourable Charles Harnick as Bill 82, and urge the Legislature to pass this bill into law as soon as possible."

I support this petition and am signing it.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I have a petition signed by hundreds of my constituents who are very concerned about Veronica Manuel and her severely disabled son Dylan. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has recommended a significant reduction of chronic care and psychiatric beds in Thunder Bay, which serves northwestern Ontario; and

"Whereas there is no commitment to reinvest the \$40 million saved back into our community to compensate families and the people who may have to abandon paying professions for the uncompensated one of caregiving but rather in the specific case of Veronica Manuel, because

of her overwhelming and demanding task as caregiver to a severely handicapped son, she has been forced on to welfare with imposed irrational eligibility criteria, poverty and hardship; and

"Whereas more and more families may also be forced to struggle under these conditions to adequately care for their loved ones, we will not only see a higher rate of unemployment but also the creation of at least two ill people for every original one;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to not only reject this recommendation but to offer adequate compensation to Veronica Manuel, recognize and support her and remove the irrational eligibility criteria that hinder her."

I'm proud to sign my name to this.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly which reads as follows:

"Whereas Mike Harris and Charles Harnick promised to improve the family support program; and

"Whereas Mike Harris promised in the Common Sense Revolution that 'government should concentrate its efforts on tracking down deadbeat parents and enforcing payment orders'; and

"Whereas the closure of the family support plan's regional offices has caused a decrease in quality services and lengthened delays; and

"Whereas the cuts to the family support plan have eliminated community-based services, replaced enforcement staff with technology, and limited communication;

"We, the undersigned, demand that Mike Harris reopen the regional offices and guarantee adequate staffing numbers to provide quality services to recipients and children."

That is signed by 36 residents of the riding of Sudbury East. I agree with the petitioners entirely and I have affixed my signature to it.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph) :** I bring to the House today a petition regarding the funding levels in contracts for cooperative housing. It's signed by 349 constituents from my riding of Guelph. It appears to be in the standard form and I am submitting it today on their behalf.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The Chair recognizes the member for Kenora on a point of privilege.

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would just like to have the House recognize that we have a good number of my constituents from Dryden, Sioux Lookout, Oxdrift and Kenora in the members' gallery with us here today. They've travelled a long distance to be with us and are here for the weekend.

**The Acting Speaker:** My mistake. It wasn't a point of privilege, but yours is not a point of order as well.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### HURONIA AIRPORT COMMISSION ACT, 1996

Mr Grimmett moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr68, An Act respecting the Huronia Airport Commission.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY AND SUPPORT ARREARS ENFORCEMENT ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

##### SUR LES OBLIGATIONS FAMILIALES ET L'EXÉCUTION DES ARRIÉRÉS D'ALIMENTS

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 82, An Act to establish the Family Responsibility Office, protect the interests of children and spouses through the strict enforcement of support orders while offering flexibility to responsible payors and make consequential amendments to certain statutes / Projet de loi 82, Loi créant le Bureau des obligations familiales, visant à protéger les intérêts des enfants et des conjoints grâce à l'exécution rigoureuse des ordonnances alimentaires tout en offrant une certaine souplesse aux payeurs responsables, et apportant des modifications corrélatives à des lois.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I am pleased to have this opportunity to join in what has been quite frankly a fascinating debate around Bill 82. I refer not so much to the speeches that have been read, the scripted written speeches, written by Lord knows whom, some PR department, that have been read by the government backbenchers. I have been impressed from time to time with the skill, the reading ability of some of those backbenchers, and at other times concerned about the relative lack of skill of the reading abilities of some of those backbenchers.

But it remains that the opposition members, quite frankly in both the Liberal caucus and in the New Democratic Party caucus, have been addressing Bill 82 in a way that's been fascinating not only to me, but as well to the thousands of people who have been watching this debate and who have been concerned about this very issue for literally months now.

One of the truly remarkable things that the government has tried to do in its hectic spin-doctoring — and Lord knows how much they're paying the PR people whom they hire to try to put positive spin on what has been a literal crisis for them — is to somehow suggest that there's been obstruction with respect to Bill 82. Oh, my God, I've listened to the debate and I've heard concerns expressed day after day, hour after hour, about the capacity of this government to operate the system as it is now, never mind with the powers that are included in Bill 82. It also has to be noted, and people have been making note of this, that the government waited 49 days before it brought Bill 82 forward for second reading. It was



November 7 when members of the New Democratic Party called for unanimous consent to bring Bill 82 forward and begin the debate on it then and now.

1540

November 7 might cause some recollection in some people's minds. I know Ms Martel is cognizant of Thursday, November 7, because Thursday, November 7, is when — see, what had been happening is that for approximately three months, our constituency offices had been plagued with a deluge of complaints about what was happening in the family support plan, in unprecedented numbers. Members of the New Democratic Party were raising these almost daily during question period to the Attorney General.

The Attorney General, on each and every occasion, in response to each and every case, attempted to, let's say, trivialize the case. He certainly wanted to create the impression that these were but the exceptions rather than the rule, the number of new problems that were being encountered by my constituency office and by Ms Martel's constituency office and Ms Lankin's and Ms Churley's and virtually every member on the opposition benches, both parties, the new and growing number of problems that we were encountering with our own offices getting in touch with the family support plan.

That had never happened before. There was a special phone line that constituency assistants could call. Sometimes it took a couple of calls, because the family support plan has always been busy, no two ways about it, and some might argue had historically warranted yet more staff than it had. Clearly the people in the family support plan were working hard and diligently in trying to resolve problems that came across their desks. But our constituency assistants and our legislative assistants, prior to around August 1996, had some level of success in contacting real people, real staff from the family support plan, and getting the problems that arose from time to time addressed and dealt with. All of a sudden, in August, this changed.

It certainly was obvious to us that the rapid and escalating and dramatic increase in the number of foulups in the system coincided with the Attorney General shutting down eight of the nine regional offices. They just shut them down. Information we've received is that this was done almost overnight, or at least so it seemed to the staff in some of those offices: just orders to order boxes, those oh-so-familiar-now brown cardboard packing boxes, pack the files, pack up the mail, and it'll be shipped on. That was the information we received from offices.

We knew that the Attorney General had shut down eight of nine regional offices. We also know that in August of this year, the Attorney General terminated 290 staff from the family support plan, staff working in all those regional offices in so far as we were concerned down in Welland-Thorold and — I know Dave Christopherson has spoken about this a number of times — including the Hamilton regional office. These people weren't working for the family support plan any more. They weren't there to address problems that had from time to time arisen and about which our constituency offices had been contacted, but more so to deal with

the new influx of support orders that were being made and continue to be made on a daily basis.

I've got to tell you, Speaker, and I don't know if I've ever had a chance to tell you this before, what happened that Thursday morning, November 7. Ms Martel and I, figuring something was seriously out of order, that something wasn't quite in sync here, that there was something inherently contradictory about how the Attorney General was trying to explain away this incredible increase in problems with the plan beginning in August 1996 and continuing through September and then into October and, as we knew, into the first week of November — there was a contradiction between that and the Attorney General's proclamation that there was this super new office set up in Downsview that was high-tech and rip-roaring, ready to go, and was going to do a job that those eight regional offices that it's purported to replace could never have contemplated in their histories.

Okay. If it was what Mr Harnick, the Attorney General, said it was, I expected that if anything, the ministry would be proud to show it off, would be proud to let a couple of small-town MPPs like Ms Martel and myself go up there and take a look at the files being processed and the cheques being processed and the new support orders — because they're happening every day across the province — being implemented.

So Ms Martel and I went up to Downsview. There we are at 7 am at the new, improved, oh-so-highly-touted family support plan office. Well, did we find computers spitting out documents and processing material, and staff for the family support plan processing cheques and payments and making sure that women and their kids were getting those payments that their former partners were making through their workplaces? No. Did we find an office? No. What did we find? We found the key to the problem here, we found the missing pieces of the puzzle, because we were puzzled by Mr Harnick day after day after day insisting that he had things under control and that they were in order.

When I got up there with Ms Martel, we saw cardboard box after cardboard box after cardboard box, unsealed, of files from family support offices across Ontario, those files that had been shipped, oh, so speedily — haphazardly, if you will — from the eight of nine regional offices that Charlie Harnick, the Attorney General, shut down, those files that normally would have been dealt with and handled and processed and investigated by the 290 staff people: hardworking, good people, committed to their jobs, dedicated, eager to address problems when they arose within the system. The staff were gone. They were gone. They'd been terminated. They weren't working for the family support plan any more. We found box after box after box of files and of correspondence, unopened, I'm sure, because that's the information we received from any number of sources within any number of FSP offices, the eight that had been shut down: that they just loaded up the cardboard boxes with unopened mail.

Where did it end up? It ended up in Downsview being warehoused, with that light film of dust that accumulates on things when they're undisturbed so as you could write



your name or, quite frankly, Charlie Harnick's name on any one of those cardboard boxes with your finger.

We found out that the problem wasn't a computer glitch. Computer glitch, my foot. There was no computer glitch. There was an Attorney General glitch; that's what there was.

1550

Let me put this proposition to you. I am confident that Charlie Harnick, the Attorney General, did not — and, please, I'm being very careful with my language — consciously or purposely lie in this House. I'm confident that he did not consciously or purposely lie, because I suspect that Charlie Harnick, the Attorney General, had never bothered to go to the Downsview office, that he believed his own hype, he believed his own spin-doctoring. Because if he had gone to the Downsview office — and Lord knows we had hoped he'd be there when we got up there on that Thursday morning, November 7, but it was like Diogenes looking for an honest man: Every corner we looked in, every unlocked door that we went through, not one to be found, certainly not the Attorney General. We found that his high-tech up in Downsview consisted of nothing more than —

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe the member opposite just called our Attorney General a dishonest man. I don't believe that is anywhere near parliamentary.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I didn't hear that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** It is a point of order. If that was the terminology used, I'd ask you to withdraw.

**Mr Kormos:** I didn't say that, Speaker, and the record will demonstrate that, please.

**The Acting Speaker:** You did not?

**Mr Kormos:** Of course not.

**The Acting Speaker:** Fine. Then I'd ask you to continue.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you. None the less, this Diogenic search by Ms Martel and myself up at the Downsview office proved futile because we didn't find what we were looking for. We didn't find Charlie Harnick, the Attorney General. We didn't find his high-tech office up and running. The most sophisticated thing there were those plain old brown cardboard boxes — that was as sophisticated as it got — stored in hallways to which the public clearly — we were there — had unfettered, uncontrolled access, strewn throughout large, incredible warehouse-style rooms with unlocked doors and unattended by any staff of any sort whatsoever; computers, looking as if — again as we have been told, just hurriedly shipped from one place to another, piled up there, their conduits and various connectors strewn about like — well, any number of similes I could use, but I won't. We found an office that was in total disarray, that wasn't operational, wasn't close to operational.

I'll tell you this, we again have been blessed with getting some information from inside the family support plan that tells us that on a good day, in the best-case scenario, that office in Downsview can't be up and running until at least January 1997, and everything we saw would indicate at the very least January 1997, if not later.

We learned, and this is undisputed by the Attorney General — oh, and the taunting that took place in the chamber of the Attorney General when he started to talk about the high-tech office. Opposition members, even some government backbenchers, were heckling. I heard some of the government backbenchers heckling the Attorney General, saying: "What high-tech? Cardboard boxes are the Attorney General's version of high-tech?" The absurdity of the Attorney General's suggestion, as I say, outraged even government backbenchers. Yes, they were somewhat careful not to be easily recognized as taunting their own Attorney General because the repercussions could indeed flow. But the outrageousness of the suggestion that that office was even close to being operational became vividly clear to anybody who saw the videotape that Ms Martel and I brought back to Queen's Park.

I suspect — and this is just a suspicion; I don't know this for a fact, but it's just a suspicion — that at some point shortly after the morning of November 7, when Ms Martel and I were up at Downsview to see the warehouse boxes and the computer equipment that wasn't even close to being set up, I suspect that the Attorney General or one of his political staff, at the very least, took a trip up there too. When they saw what we saw, the expression "Holy zonkers" was probably the most modest misstatement of the exclamation that would flow, because they would have seen the very same thing we saw: chaos, anarchy, if you will. No, it wasn't even akin to anarchy, because anarchy suggests some sort of activity — zip, zero, nothing. The office was in a catatonic state, and it was obvious to Mr Harnick's political staff who I'm sure went up there.

I'm not sure the Attorney General himself wanted to go up there, because I suspect that by the time Thursday afternoon came around, there finally were some security guards working at the Downsview office. I suspect that there were a couple in position at the foyer, where Ms Martel and I couldn't find any when we entered the building at 7 in the morning. I suspect that finally there was some sort of reception area whereby people entering the building and entering the elevator to go up to the fourth floor or the fifth floor or the sixth floor — I suspect there was finally somebody at a work station to ask at least who you are and have you sign in.

Heck, anybody whom we encountered up at the Downsview office — and we did; we found a young woman working in the sixth floor.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** I'll explain that in just a sec. She was in there. We walked in and we explained. Ms Martel told her, "I'm Shelley Martel." I told her: "I'm Peter Kormos. We're from Queen's Park." She indicated that she was a GO temp, one of these temporary services people — and again, I've got no quarrel with people to have to work for GO Temp. I have a great deal of sympathy for them because they get ripped off, they get scammed by virtue of inevitably low wages and basically no protection in terms of their relationship with the employer. She spoke with us and she indicated that there were a few other people who would be showing up there eventually and that they were in training. In training? The Attorney



General laid off 290 staff people, and here was a poor young woman merely in training.

Let me tell you some of the response. Well, we know the response of the Attorney General. He went ballistic. The Attorney General went ballistic. He was bouncing off walls. You could have illuminated the city for a week with the fireworks that Mr Harnick generated down at 720 Bay Street when it was clear that we had videotaped his secret. That's really what it was: It was a secret. It was a secret that the Ministry of the Attorney General wanted very badly to keep, that there was no office in Downsview; there were no working staff there; there were no work stations that were functional; there were no computers plugged in; there were no telephones that were operative; there weren't any fax machines that were receiving or sending out faxes. I guess we videotaped Charlie's secret.

As I say, we know what Charlie Harnick's response was. Charlie went ballistic. Boom. No two ways about it. Right off the wall, bouncing. I'm not sure, but I think I heard him from over here in Queen's Park, and that's while he was still down at 720 Bay Street.

Let me tell you, people from across this province who had had the same difficulty understanding why all of a sudden in August and September and October 1996 and, yes, now through November, their family support plan files were getting fouled up, screwed up, jiggered, had been as confounded as we were in the opposition, because they were assured by Mr Harnick day after day that this Downsview office was taking care of business. But they knew then too about Mr Harnick's secret, about the government's little secret up in Downsview.

It's incredible, the contact we had. We of course generated a whole lot of correspondence and telephone calls from people who said, "Look, once all is said and done, the reality is that my kids are going hungry because Mr Harnick has shut down the family support plan and isn't processing the moneys that my former spouse is having deducted from his workplace." Let's make it very clear, let's understand very clearly, that the moneys that are distributed by the family support plan are not public funds; they are moneys that are deducted from the paycheques of, in the vast majority of cases, men. It doesn't have to be men; it can be women who are the payors, supporting spouses. They are moneys that are being deducted to be processed and sent to the rightful recipient, a mom and her kids, whose money it is and who weren't getting it.

You were here, Speaker, after Ms Martel and I got back from the Kitchener-Waterloo area, and you saw some of the unpaid bills and invoices and overdue accounts that were exposed by Ms Martel as she confronted the Attorney General about his dirty little Downsview secret — eviction notices, overdue telephone bills, overdue utility bills.

1600

We were talking to families, women and their kids, who were on the verge of losing their homes because they were about to be evicted; who were on the verge of losing heat and electricity as we begin winter, and it's been a particularly cold November; at risk of losing their heat and their electricity because of unpaid bills because

the Attorney General has their money and won't give it to them. He's got their money, not just thousands, not just hundreds of thousands, but literally millions of dollars that the Attorney General has that doesn't belong to him, that belongs to these women and their kids who are being forced out of their homes and forced into the cold and the snow and the bitterness of a Christmas that would have been modest at the best of times, but because of an Attorney General who really is the penultimate deadbeat, is going to become tragic and miserable for hundreds of thousands.

One fax that we got on Friday from Point Edward, Ontario, in big headlines it says: "Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah. Don't stop now. Keep up the pressure. Harass, harass, harass." The author of this fax knows about harassment, because this government, Mike Harris and their Attorney General, have been harassing her for the last three and a half months when they have not been processing the support that her partner has been paying through his workplace into the family support plan.

I tell you, she saw the videotape. She said the videotape was clear to her that no one was working in the Downsview office, that no one was there to return calls. There weren't any phones set up to return calls. No one was filing all the confidential records. They were strewn about hallways and public places and in unlocked rooms — and "strewn about," I mean that literally. You've got to look at the videotape again, Speaker. If this were Mike Harris's videotape, there would be a 1-800 number to call to get one. You know that. But you've got to look at the videotape: open cartons, half-empty, contents spilled out on to the floor in totally accessible, non-secured offices.

The person from Point Edward speaks on behalf, as she wrote, of the thousands of others behind in their rent, who can't pay utility bills and may even be struggling to put food on the table. She expressed some thanks for the exposure of Charlie's dirty little secret up in Downsview, hidden away on the fourth, fifth and sixth floors of that Ministry of Transportation building; the vision, as he would attempt to create it day after day in response to questions, of this high-tech, fully operational office being shattered in but a few minutes of harshly real videotape which exposed that nasty little secret and let thousands of women and their spouses and their kids know across this province that this government — is "mendacity" an appropriate description of this government in its response to the questions by the opposition? I suppose "mendacity" is — that this government had been mendacious in its response to questions put to it by members of the New Democratic Party caucus; that the Premier had been; that the Attorney General had been.

Of course we're going to support the proposition of enforcement measures. Again, I know some have raised objections, saying that they could well be challenged subsequently as being contrary to various rights provisions. So be it; that'll be resolved later. I tell you, to support the proposition that there are going to be user fees that can be imposed by the family support plan on participants in that plan is something that is intolerable to anybody in this caucus, to support the proposition that by fiat a director can determine that any number of files are



simply not to be collected. Maybe that's what the office in Downsview is ultimately for, to store all of the files that the director is going to close, as of right from the statute, so that the government can look good and not appear to be overly engaged in the quest to seek out arrears.

There's not a single person who has spoken with me about the appropriateness of using, let's say, licence suspensions as a means of enforcing orders in arrears who has also agreed that the director of the family support plan should have the right to simply shut down a file, to shut a case, to close it out, to take it off the system. Nor is there a single person who has agreed that the proposition of user fees, that in the instance of parties opting out of the plan — and one of the important things about the family support plan, as it was an amendment to SCOE, was the universality of it. Of course the proposition, and I recall it well, in response to that aspect of it was that people will be outraged. The fact remains that payors and payees have, until this government screwed up the plan big time, royally — this government shut it down — tended to acknowledge that a universal plan that applied to all support orders was the fairest and most appropriate and most efficient way to do it.

The plan is so screwed up that there will be a whole lot of people who will opt out because this government did a number on the plan; this government shut it down. So this government will have forced people to opt out and then, when problems develop in the collection of their payments, will charge them a fee for getting back in. That's not what was ever contemplated, either by SCOE when it was developed — and it was developed during that period of accord when the New Democrats forced the minority Liberal government of the day to implement such a plan — or by the family support plan as it was implemented by the Attorneys General of the last government here in the province of Ontario. User fees, simply cutting people off, simply shutting them down, having a scattered plan with an opting-out provision, these are aspects of the bill that simply aren't acceptable.

I tell you this: This bill warrants being put to committee promptly. Don't forget it was New Democrats who had urged this government, on November 7, with unanimous consent to bring this bill forward to debate, and this government waited 50 days — 49 to be precise — 49 days before it brought the bill forward. We know why it brought the bill forward. It brought the bill forward because the exposure of its dirty little secret embarrassed the daylights out of the government. They got caught — bold-faced, bare-faced, red-handed caught — in their penultimate mendacity. This government has to take control of the FSP instead of trying to obfuscate as it does with Bill 82.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** We've listened to the member for Welland-Thorold talk about his trip to Downsview and boxes and other assorted things. The fact of the matter is, we have a problem in this province with respect to the family support plan and we've had it for the last decade, really. He will argue of course that we caused it, but the fact of the matter is, when you talk to

anyone who's been involved in this, whether it's been lawyers, whether it's parents, whether it be women who are involved, the problems have been going on for some time. Obviously the decentralized system didn't work. The enforcement procedures didn't work. That's the whole purpose of this bill.

The facts are that each day the family support plan receives 8,000 pieces of correspondence, and the decentralized system simply wasn't able to handle it. The decentralized system handled 50,000 telephone calls per day, of which only 6% were answered. The member for Welland-Thorold seems to be supporting the decentralized system. The fact of the matter is that only clients in the eight cities where these regional offices were located had counter access to the program. Fewer than 60 people visited each regional office each day, and they did so because they were unable to reach the program by telephone. That's why they were doing it. The system didn't work.

Caseloads were uneven across the province. Thunder Bay had 3,000 cases, 11 staff, versus Whitby — which is the area that serviced my riding, and I don't know why in the world Whitby was servicing the town of Orangeville — which had 26,000 to 28,000 cases a day and 60 staff. The process was helter-skelter across the province. We're going to fix that.

Regions didn't make sense geographically. As I've stated, for example, Whitby rather than Toronto served Brampton. How strange. Calls to the plan didn't go through the regional offices but were redirected to central inquiry in each case. Many clients said they preferred to reach the program by phone, eliminating the need for regional offices to serve as walk-in centres. All of these problems we're going to fix.

1610

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I think the member for Welland-Thorold's comments were thoughtful and reasonable, and I don't always say that about the comments of the member for Welland-Thorold. But in this particular case the revolution is really on. How do revolutions occur? What happens in a revolution? In a revolution there's always chaos. That's what happens when a revolution occurs, rather than an evolution or a thoughtful public policy, a change.

The member for Dufferin-Peel makes the point there are problems, big problems, in the family support plan. I don't think any member on any side of this Legislature would say there weren't big problems. There were huge problems. There were problems that were causing women and children, mostly, a great deal of heartache. They weren't able to pay their bills, they weren't able to do a great number of things. That existed, and nobody would deny it, since SCOE was introduced back in 1987. It had to be fixed.

There needed to be better enforcement measures, and they're contained here in Bill 82. There had to be a change in the way the bureaucracy handled those things. What I find really difficult to believe is that the government's solution to this very problem was to literally blow it up and then just scratch their head and say, "Well, now what am I going to do?" The victims of this revolution were the women and children across this province. To



deny that and to have the Attorney General deny that on a day-by-day basis is offensive to us all.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I want to commend my colleague from Welland-Thorold for his comments today and I want to reinforce a number of points that he made.

First of all, I want to reinforce again the portions of this bill which we find to be utterly unacceptable, portions of this bill which will in the long term hurt women and children, not help them, as the Attorney General purports.

Number one, user fees: It's unacceptable that we would be charging any form of user fees for people trying to opt back into the plan, for people trying to get documents from the plan, or for any other service that the plan provides. Let me remind government members, this is not taxpayers' money. The money that is owed to women and children comes from legal court orders which they have obtained. It comes from payors who are assuming responsibility for their children and for their ex-spouses. The government of the day has absolutely no right in this legislation to implement any form of user fees for these services whatsoever.

Secondly, it is unacceptable that the director of the plan would have the discretion, the authority, the ability to determine that somehow cases are no longer enforceable and that he can somehow shut those cases down. What will happen is that two years from now the Attorney General will stand in his place and he will say that his provisions are working and that we have only \$300 million of arrears, and he won't say that the director has wiped off hundreds of millions of dollars of arrears because the director has decided that those are somehow unenforceable.

The Attorney General, in his own comments in his opening remarks on this debate, said that \$500 million of arrears was unenforceable, according to his calculation, and I have no doubt that's the \$500 million he's going to want the director to write off. That's not right. That's not acceptable. It certainly isn't fair to the women and children in this province who are owed that money and who have a right to get it back.

**Mr Ron Johnson (Brantford):** It gives me great pleasure to respond to the member for Welland-Thorold and also some of the things the member for Sudbury East said. I'll reiterate what I said last week, and it's obvious that the members across the way weren't listening when I spoke.

I remember that when I was elected MPP for Brantford just over a year ago one of the first things I had to deal with — and I want the member for Welland-Thorold to listen to what I'm saying — one of the first concerns and the first things that fell to my office were complaints about the family support plan. It wasn't working.

The reason it wasn't working is that the member for Welland-Thorold and his colleague the member for Sudbury East and the rest of the NDP caucus did absolutely nothing to help support and change and fix what at that time was a broken family support plan. It was their inaction and their inability to show leadership on the issue which has resulted in thousands and thousands of women and children who even today, despite what we've

done so far in our efforts — and I think this new bill will address most of the concerns — still are suffering as a result of a broken family support plan.

I want to say that I am very encouraged by Bill 82, and of course it's got my unequivocal support because I believe that this bill is a very proactive piece of legislation, despite what the member for Sudbury East says.

**Ms Martel:** Tell that to those women who'll have \$500 million in support written off.

**Mr Ron Johnson:** I hear her yacking over there. But I've got to tell you, when she was in government she didn't do a darned thing to help women and children in this province. In fact, it was her government that put more women and more children on welfare than any other government in the history of this country.

As somebody who supports Bill 82 and as somebody who sees this as a very progressive piece of legislation, it gives me absolute, tremendous pleasure to support this legislation. I want to commend the Attorney General for developing the legislation, which we think will help women and children.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Welland-Thorold has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Kormos:** One has to be a little amused by the member for Dufferin-Peel —

**Mr Michael Brown:** That's polite.

**Mr Kormos:** Well, that is polite — and by the member from the Brantford area, the fellow in the back, the one who just spoke. We understand why the government cut 290 staff and why it shut down eight of the nine regional offices. Those were the cuts they had to engage in to help fund the 30% tax break for the richest in this province, their rich buddies. The 30% tax break for the rich is being funded, in this instance, by exposing women and their kids to poverty, to the prospect of eviction, to the prospect of overdue and unpaid utility bills. This government is all that anxious to create a 30% tax break for the richest that it will attack women and children.

This is the same government that reduced support payments by way of social assistance to the poorest in our society to the tune of 21.6%, almost 22% — people and their kids. This government takes pride in that. Here it is, we're about a month away from Christmas, when the members of this Tory group will have the luxury, with their \$78,000-plus incomes, of sitting down to goose and turkey dinners. Yet the poverty and the despair that they've created for so many women and so many children in this province will create longer and longer lineups at food banks, longer and longer lineups at missions and hostels and by the advent of a rate of child poverty here in the city of Toronto, that Mike Harris created, that's higher than any region in all of Canada, including the poorest parts of Canada. Shame on you.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further debate?

1620

**Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce):** I rise today in support of Bill 82, the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act. I am confident that my colleagues on both sides of the House are as anxious as I and the other members of this side are to pass this legislation so that no more time is wasted and we will be able to provide the



women and children with the support money to which they are entitled.

When women and children do not receive support payments owed to them, they're often forced into poverty and on to social assistance. This is unacceptable and we are going to do something about it, and the sooner, the better.

The Ministry of the Attorney General is already fundamentally transforming the family support plan to improve service by consolidating all the plan's operations into one location, the Family Responsibility Office. We're well aware that in the past it didn't work the way it was. We need to make changes so that these payments can be made: by more than doubling the number of front-line staff workers, from 40 to 97; by providing one-stop service for clients; by giving staff the authority and the training to immediately address the problems; by creating a call response centre with the capacity to handle thousands of calls per day — and that's with a real voice and a real person attached to the other end, not a system that has it backed up into an infinite number of days before a response is even thought of being made; by enhancing the free 1-800 telephone service to provide greater access to the plan for all Ontarians; by investing almost \$1 million in new technology to improve service, including telephone access beyond regular business hours and better fax capabilities; and by moving to the much faster electronic transmission of funds.

Although the plan is in transition to the new and improved service, it is already producing results. Where it used to take up to a week or more to produce a cheque, it now only takes 24 to 36 hours. This month, in one week alone, \$12 million was disbursed to women and children. During this transition, more than 95% of the individual concerns brought to the attention of the ministry have been resolved and where there are special problems, immediate action has been taken.

The Attorney General and his ministry are doing all they can to fix the problem. As we all realize, problems aren't created overnight and can't be fixed overnight, but we're moving with haste to try and improve it as quickly as we can. In order to truly resolve the situation, we must address the nearly \$1 billion that defaulting payors owe to women and to children. Three out of four families are not receiving the full amount of the support to which they are legally entitled, and in more than half of those cases that are registered with the plan, money does not flow regularly. It's not a new problem; it's an outstanding problem, one which we know we have to address.

In addition, the existing enforcement tools are not effective in tracking self-employed and intermittently employed defaulting payors. The old family support plan that our government inherited in June 1995 was not working, is not working and has never worked. The problems it has caused which are creating hardships for women and for children will continue until Bill 82 is passed.

Bill 82 contains some of the toughest support payment measures in North America. These measures include such things as suspending the driver's licence of those who refuse to meet their family support responsibilities; reporting to credit bureaus the names of parents who do

not pay their child support, thereby affecting defaulting parents' credit ratings; obtaining financial statements and making orders against third parties who help support payors avoid enforcement by sheltering their assets; seizing 50% of any funds in a joint bank account of a payor and his or her new partner; expanding the definition of "income source" to include commissions, salary draws, advances and lump sum payments; and providing better methods to trace and locate defaulting parents who cannot be found so that the plan can take enforcement action.

The message that this legislation sends to parents who don't pay their child support is very clear: Not paying child support and not complying with court orders is no longer acceptable and will not be tolerated in the province of Ontario.

This legislation also recognizes a serious flaw in the system administered by the previous governments: Parents who have reached amicable separation settlements and have no dispute over support payments cannot opt out of this government-mandated program at present. As a result, taxpayers are paying for a service to monitor those parents who are complying with support obligations.

The plan's caseload has grown 40% over the past three years and there are currently 150,000 cases in the system. We cannot afford to handle cases where family support payments can be effectively managed without government intervention. Therefore, Bill 82 will allow consenting parties to opt out of this government-mandated enforcement system. This measure gives responsible parents a choice of making their own private arrangements to provide support and at the same time ensures that vulnerable individuals will be protected from coercion. In turn, this will allow the ministry to streamline the family support plan so that it can focus on the cases where the government's resources are most needed and can be most effective in collecting the money that women and children are entitled to.

These are not quick-fix solutions. They are part of a long-term strategy to overhaul the system and ensure that the problems that have plagued women and children who depend on the family support plan are fixed properly and permanently. Getting money into the hands of women and children who need it is our number one priority. Our goal is to ensure that the new program works for the children it is meant to serve and that women and children receive the service they need when they need it and from staff trained and equipped to provide it. However, each day that passes is one more day that women and children in this province are forced to do without. The women and children of Ontario cannot wait any longer. They need our help and they need it now.

Through you, Mr Speaker, I would ask all members of this House to act quickly and pass this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Michael Brown:** I am concerned, at least a little bit, about some of the comments from the member for Bruce. Maybe she can help me and in her response she will no doubt clarify that. I have been a member of the Legislature for nine years, maybe a little more, and I've had experience with SCOE and the family support plan.



We have had calls in my constituency office pretty much since I was elected regarding the family support plan and SCOE that came before it. It has been a problem.

But you know what? The calls from constituents about the family support plan have increased to my office about fivefold in the last two or three months. Currently —

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** Name names.

**Mr Michael Brown:** The member says, "Name names." You know you can't do that. But I will tell you that the total arrears — these are the current family support plan inquiries, the people that just called my office — are \$84,000.

I just wonder if the member for Bruce's own constituency office isn't experiencing this very same phenomenon, that since Mr Harnick closed the regional offices, supposedly centralized to Toronto, she has not experienced a huge increase in the number of family support plan inquiries she was getting, not just from the parent who was receiving the support, but often from the parent who was paying the support, because it was being paid, it just was not getting to the spouse or the ex-spouse that needed it.

I would just like the member for Bruce to clarify what's going on in her constituency office today with regard to this plan.

1630

**Ms Martel:** Let me make the following comments. I heard the member for Bruce say that women and children can't wait any longer, we have to pass this bill, and I really find it appalling that the Conservative government would be holding out such false promises to women, that if this bill were passed today, suddenly tomorrow enforcement action is going to be taken on their cases.

I would remind the member for Bruce and all of the Conservative members in the House today that Downsview is nowhere near to being up and running. We exposed the government on that score three weeks ago. There are boxes piled all over the place, faxes that are not in, computers that are not in. That office isn't going to be running for months. You have staff who have just been hired, never mind even having their training started. You laid off the 290 experienced staff who would have been in a good position to implement some of these positions. Now you have staff who are just being hired, who are just in training, who won't be able to take on these additional responsibilities for months yet.

We just found out in this House last week that the requests for proposals for the new technology which is needed to put some of these enforcement mechanisms into place just went out two weeks ago. You don't have the computer technology to implement any of these changes. You won't have it for months, you won't have it purchased, people trained on it and ready to go for months. How dare you stand in your place and tell people that if we pass this today, somehow we're going to have some response for them tomorrow.

The worst part of it is, to all of you who have tried to say we've had historical problems, the way you decided to fix it is appalling. Your Attorney General laid off 290 staff. He closed eight regional offices. He sent women and children who used to receive regular support payments into financial distress. And what for? To help all

of you finance the big tax break for the rich and famous. I hope you're proud that he did that.

**Mr Ron Johnson:** I just want to reply to a couple of comments and of course, first I want to congratulate the member for Bruce on her very insightful remarks. I have to say that she made some very good points and I hope the opposition really took note of some of the things she was saying.

She indicated that 75%, a full three out of four families today, are not getting the support they deserve because of the broken family support plan. That's a full 75%, so obviously, as the member for Bruce correctly points out, there has been absolutely no success in the way the family support plan has been operated in the past.

Again, she said, and I found this very enlightening, it is going to send a very clear message that you cannot go against court orders. If you have a court order, you must comply. This government is not going to tolerate parents who do not meet the obligations to their families. I think that was a very important message that the member for Bruce so rightly pointed out. It's all about making parents responsible for their children. That's what this legislation is for and I think, at the same time, we're going to see us be able to manage the family support plan much more quickly and much more effectively.

With respect to a remark that the member for Algoma-Manitoulin made, he was talking about how he's hearing from his constituents. I want to tell him what the constituents in Brantford are saying because I've talked to a lot of women and their children, and men as well, who are involved in the FSP. They're telling me loud and clear to get this legislation passed because they need it.

The member for Sudbury East points out, and I might say correctly, that the legislation being passed today doesn't mean it's going to be fixed tomorrow. We acknowledge that. That's a no-brainer. But at the same time, if we get it done today, we will eventually get it implemented a lot quicker. She would rather wait, but we're a government of action.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** One doesn't know where to begin in terms of responding to the comments made by the member for Brantford and the speech by the member for Bruce because there are so many elements of this that make you just think of how hypocritical the government is. On the one hand, they're talking about getting the bill passed immediately. On the other hand, they introduced the bill and then waited 49 days to bring it for second reading debate. It's quite bizarre.

The member for Brantford talks about the need for enforcement, and we recognize there's some useful enforcement tools in this bill. But here we have a government that closes down the regional offices in August and enforcement completely absolutely ceases as of that time. The whole system has been a complete disaster, yet they piously stand there and talk about how this bill must get passed immediately when they themselves have been the ones delaying it, let alone the fact that their office in Downsview is still not ready to go. Those are just the facts. You can't even deny them. Those are simply the facts. We know that's the case.



Responding if I may also to the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, I want to back up what he is saying. Certainly before August we did have the occasional call in terms of family support and we were glad to take them on. The fact is that after that date, the number of calls in my constituency office went up extraordinarily.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Forty-nine days.

**Mr Gravelle:** I did say 49 days between the first and second reading. Thank you very much, the member for St Catharines.

The fact is that the numbers have gone up extraordinarily in terms of the calls of people desperate for help. The fact is the calls were going up. Why did they go up? Because you closed the regional offices, you laid off 290 people, people who were skilled and who cared and who were involved in this program. You closed the program down, for God's sake. You've got to recognize that. If you want to pretend you've had no calls at all, we happen to know that is probably not the truth. I don't know why you're into denial. The fact is, you can't have it both ways.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Bruce has two minutes to respond.

**Mrs Fisher:** I'm very appreciative of the time in the House today so that we can once again summarize before we get on with the vote, I hope relatively soon. Now would be great, but of course that's not going to happen.

I would like to address a couple of the comments of the Algoma-Manitoulin member, the Sudbury East member, the Port Arthur member and everybody else, as a matter of fact, who has talked to this bill in the past.

The difference between what we're looking at here in this House is dwelling on the past and the mistakes, and that's what people from the opposite side continue to reiterate: the past, the mistakes. I don't know how anybody can stand and be proud of that, because it doesn't solve the problem. The problem is that we have women and children who need their support payments. Why a member opposite would stand and brag about an \$84,000 outstanding claim, which represents not a month or two or three or four, but years of incompetence, is beyond me. Maybe what we need to do is really address what we're here for: serving the people of Ontario.

In fact, as our government has demonstrated, we care. We have to move forward. We want to make the mistakes into positive actions of delivery. We need to take care of our people. We need to realize that in any transition of any program that is this large, there will be bumps until it is fully in service. We have experienced in my office, since I was elected, numerous, numerous outstanding, continuing, carryover cases which I can, as a matter of fact, attribute back past the five years that some will only take credit for doing it for but in fact go back further than that. We are going to come with solutions that are going to bring remedies to those problems. We are going to take care of the people.

I just want to remind us, in the few short seconds I have left, of a letter that was read into Hansard a few days ago by the minister. It says: "We believe that the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, is good legislation and will accomplish our

goals for tougher enforcement. That is why we need you to stop the political games and expedite the passage of the legislation. Putting your political motives ahead of the needs of Ontario's children is reprehensible. Shame on you for that" — as written by the Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears.

1640

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Michael Brown:** I look forward to participating in this debate. If the members would notice, I asked the member for Bruce if miraculously there was not a huge increase in the number of calls to the family support plan when they blew up the regional offices, laid off 290 people, without a system in place to make the transition work. Did I get an answer from the member for Bruce? No, I didn't. Who are the victims? The victims are the children and, mostly, women of Ontario who are being captured, being used as prisoners in this war, this revolution that cares only about the wealthy in the province of Ontario. That's the revolution we're in and that's what we're seeing.

Members should understand what we're talking about today. We know that 97% of the parents ordered to pay child support in Canada are fathers. About 76% of the support orders are in arrears. Ontario fathers currently owe about \$1 billion. This goes up about \$10 million per year. It costs the taxpayers of this province \$300 million in social assistance payments to families who are not receiving the support payments they are due. That is a huge and important problem to solve.

I think we should take the members back and understand that this is a huge and important problem and it needs to be solved with some common sense. That term might be somewhat familiar to the government members: common sense. So we have a problem, we know we have a problem, and how are we going to address it? I would suggest to you that the way you address a problem is to get a game plan and then to put it into place. In this case you will need legislation, and Bill 82 meets that criterion. We have legislation. That's good. We had a plan in place. We had to get to a new plan. You needed to know what the legislation would be before you could get from A to B. What did we see? We saw the Attorney General, with absolutely callous disregard for the children of this province, blow up, get rid of, lay off 290 workers in the regional centres across Ontario with no real plan other than some vague notion of centralization to deal with it. They just shut it down.

It's no wonder that my constituency office is flooded with family support plan calls. They have gone up, in terms of frequency, four to five times over what it has been during my history as a member, over eight or nine years. I don't think that has anything to do with Bill 82. It has to do with a government that is incompetent. It has to do with a government that has callous disregard for the children of the province of Ontario, for the women of the province of Ontario, callous disregard for those who need the help the most. Attack the victims: That's the policy of the revolution, and that's what we've seen in this catastrophe that the Attorney General stands up and embarrasses himself on a daily basis by defending.



It is not possible. There are 130 members in this Legislature. I do not believe my constituency would be a lot different than Port Arthur or Bruce or Brantford or Sudbury East. It would not be different. We have the same problem. And the problem has grown to catastrophic proportions over the last three or four months. It's absolutely a disaster, and it's all caused by the revolution, it's all caused by callous mismanagement of a system, it's all caused because the Attorney General, in his business plan, had to find a bunch of cash to pay for the Harris tax scheme. That's the tax scheme that rewards people for being bank presidents, the tax scheme that rewards people like bank presidents to the tune of probably \$200,000 per year and at the same time attacks the middle class, attacks the children of this province through withdrawal of programs and attacks virtually all the institutions that Ontarians have come to believe are important to them and important to our society. I think there's no better example than the Attorney General's handling of the family support plan in this particular instance.

I have before me a partial list of the constituents in Algoma-Manitoulin who are having some difficulty — not some; it's impossible for them to deal with the family support plan. I have one that's probably the most recent one who has arrears starting in November. The second one has arrears of \$500; a third one has not received a cent since May 1996. Another one has not seen any money since August. The next one is receiving only one third of her court-ordered payment. The next one can't find \$229. The family support plan doesn't know where it is — gone.

The next one, \$1,475 is owing and there hasn't been a payment since August. We have another one who's receiving only one quarter of the court-ordered amount, and one who just wanted to change his address. This is a payor. He moved, he changed his address, he tried to let the family support plan know that he had changed so they could make the appropriate deductions, so things would work properly. He can't get through. He has had no response from the family support plan.

We have another female who's owed \$493. Christmas is coming. We have another one, a woman, who hasn't seen a payment since May 1996. It goes on and on and on, and these are real people. It is why the family support plan needs to be reformed, but it is not the reason to blow it up; it is not the reason to do what the revolution has done to these people.

Any sensible, even commonsensical, government would have dealt with this problem in a reasonable fashion before laying off 290 people, before closing eight regional centres. It would have set up the system that was going to take its place. Even if you agree that the solution is right, and that is quite debatable, but even if you agree that the government's position on how to have cost-effectively managed the system was right, the government in its haste to pay for its crazy tax cut decided to forget about transition: "There's no need for a transition period. We'll just close them down and see what happens."

And who suffered? Was it Mr Eves and the treasury? No, I don't think so. Was it the bank presidents? I don't think so. It's the women and children in the province of

Ontario. What I find the most galling is the fact that the government stays on message, as you say; stays on message — you keep repeating the same thing. It doesn't matter whether it's wrong. You repeat and you repeat and you repeat and you repeat, and sooner or later people will come to believe that to be fact.

But I look over at the back bench over there and I would think that some of you would understand what I understand in Algoma-Manitoulin, that this is a real problem for real people approaching winter, approaching Christmas without the money to pay utility bills, without the money to buy coats and boots for the kids, without the money to think about Christmas at all because the government has mismanaged this file to a degree that is, I might say, criminal — is that permissible, Mr Speaker, "criminal"? — and they know it. I can't believe that a back bench member of the government would stand up and defend what's going on here. It has to be the biggest example of incompetence and bad public policy I have ever seen.

1650

We had Bill 82 before us. Bill 82 should have been before us before the government made one move with regard to family support. We should have had the legislation, because it only makes sense that before you decide how you're going to do something, you know what you're going to do. So the legislation needed to come first. We should have seen that in the spring and it could have been acted upon in the spring. The government then could have set up the appropriate bureaucratic mechanism for enforcing the legislation that it is bringing forward and then designed a transition process to move from the present system to the new and "improved" system. I think most people would say that would be common sense, that it would work.

**Mr Preston:** Why didn't you do it when you had a chance?

**Mr Michael Brown:** The member says, "Why didn't you do it when you had a chance?" As the member would know, SCOE was put in place, not family support, in 1987 or 1986 when it actually started to run. It had some problems. It didn't work perfectly, as any system that's started up. Given the technology, the changes in society that have come since then, any government would have to change.

**Mr Preston:** They didn't.

**Mr Michael Brown:** The member doesn't know what he's talking about. He said, "They didn't." They did. They changed it to the family support plan, with a wide variety of changes to the former SCOE system, some of which we disagreed with at the time, some of which Liberals did not think was the proper solution. However, it was their solution. They did something. It may have been wrong, but they did something.

Instead of playing partisan politics with this, why don't we just approach this matter in a sensible way? I'm saying the legislation was introduced on October 2. Why did the government wait 49 days to call it in here? Forty-nine days, and now they're all in a hurry: "Got to be done today. We're going to vote at 5:45. The world won't be a reasonable place to be. We waited for 49 days but now we need it by 5:45, and if you guys don't do it,



women and children are going to suffer." That's an absurd argument. It's not even worthy of this government to make that argument because we know if we pass this today, the provisions of this bill can't be enacted tomorrow anyway. It will take some time after this act is put together and actually proclaimed after third reading for the government to enforce the regulations in this, particularly in that they have this huge chaos going on in the system.

I want to say to you, I look over at some of the members who I used to think were reasonable when they were on this side of the House —

**Mr Tilson:** We're still your friends.

**Mr Michael Brown:** I'm told they're still my friends — and I wonder: What is going on in your constituency office? Are you not experiencing the same problems I'm having in mine? We're trying to help people and the caseload we're getting is almost insurmountable.

I'm told, as a matter of fact, by my constituency assistant, who called the Attorney General's office and talked to his political staff person who's in charge of sorting out these things on behalf of MPPs, that he was most happy because he was getting out of this job tomorrow and there would be a new person who would have to deal with it, because he was finding it impossible. He didn't like getting all the flak. He didn't like the fact that he couldn't get answers. He didn't like the fact that he couldn't respond not only to opposition members but I think basically to the government back bench. The calls were coming into the Attorney General's political staffers' office at a rate that they could not cope with themselves. They were as frustrated with it as we are, and our frustration is nothing compared to the women and children across the province who are having real financial difficulties.

These are not people who have three or four months' income sitting in a bank somewhere that they can draw down on. The people who need this money are generally young families, single support. If they are able to have a job and they have young children, they have the costs of providing child care to their children while they're at work. They have a huge number of costs that we all know about when you have young children. That's the time when your income is typically the lowest. So every dollar that comes in is a precious dollar. It is a dollar that the family needs. It's a dollar that the family needs for clothes for the kids for going to school, for buying the school supplies, for all those things. It is not a frill. There isn't a choice for these people.

The government must have known. I look over at these folks over here and I know that some of them have been in business, the occasional one, and they know that in business you would not manage a transition like this. Could you imagine an insurance company managing a transition of files like this? It would be impossible.

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** They do it all the time.

**Mr Michael Brown:** I hope you didn't mean that. They would not do that.

I guess my biggest problem here is this staying-on-message business. No matter what we say over here,

whatever the back bench on the Conservative government side knows and says, it's two different things. Their constituency offices are being deluged with calls from people who really do need their help. They're being called by fathers. They're being called by fathers who have made their payments. They have made their payments faithfully for three or four months. They have not been received by the spouse, or the ex-spouse. Where's the money? I suspect some of the money is in some of those boxes out at Downsview. I suspect that some of the mail hasn't been opened. I suspect that it will take maybe years to sort out the mess of the transition period that the government administration has had. It is not the government that loses here. The government doesn't lose anything. What would the government lose? Who loses are the children.

I wonder what it would have cost the government to have managed this transition in a reasonable way. I wouldn't suspect it would have cost very much money. I think it would have been money well spent. I think the government knows it should have done it. I think the government should come clean and tell the people of Ontario that just to fund a tax scheme that benefits their corporate friends the most, they are quite willing to attack in this revolution of theirs the victims.

I think you would agree that this is just another element that we might say paints a picture of this government across the board. That's how they operate. First you take everything apart, throw the pieces on the floor, and then you see if you can figure out how to get it back together. That might be all right if it's the old jalopy you're working with, but this is people's lives.

I want to speak just for a little bit about the enforcement measures that are provided in the bill. This is a tough bill and enforcement is a problem. But I would tell the government that (a) enforcement costs money and you're going to have to spend it if you're going to get a return from it; and (b) you better get your bureaucratic act together or this enforcement will be the nightmare of all nightmares.

**1700**

I look at some of the things that are included in the enforcement.

Suspending the driver's licence of defaulters: If you're in default of your family support plan payment, you will lose your driver's licence or have it suspended — a very good idea, I think. However, given the track record of this bureaucracy, how many drivers' licences of fathers who have paid their family support will be suspended? In my own constituency office, probably a quarter of the people here would have their licence suspended, and they haven't missed a payment. I want to see you explain that to them.

You're going to report defaulters to credit rating bureaus — same problem. How many people's credit ratings do you want to destroy because your bureaucracy works this well?

They're going to garnish joint bank accounts up to 50% if one of the holders of the account is a defaulting payor. That should make some interesting arrangements in partnerships across the province. Again, this is not a bad idea, but where the rubber hits the road over there,



you'd better get it right or you'll be taking the money not only of the person you're accusing of being in default but another person's money also. Given the history of this bureaucracy, I would be very concerned that this will cause some problems.

I'm saying to the government, you'd better take some time to figure out how you're going to get this right, because you'll end up with not only the people who are supposed to get support not getting it, but you're going to find out that you'll be taking money from people who have absolutely nothing to do with this particular court order and taking it off into Never-Never Land. I think you'd better be careful.

What else are we going to do here? Oh, they're going to order third parties who have a financial relationship with the defaulter to provide financial statements and allow orders to be made against such parties if they were involved in sheltering the payor's assets or income from enforcement of the support order. Well, of course this is a problem. There has always been a problem where people will shuffle off to Buffalo some of the money, so to speak. They will shelter it in someone else's account etc.

The difficulty here is deciding when that happens. The difficulty is deciding whose money really is over there. Again, I'm telling you this will be expensive, and you'd better get it right. You'd better actually find people who are sheltering the money and keeping it away from the government, because you're going to have someone paying someone else's child support if you're not careful.

They're going to put liens against property.

This one people will really enjoy: They're intercepting lottery winnings of \$1,000 or more and requiring support arrears to be paid from them before the winnings are distributed to the defaulter. I guess you're going to have a direct line to the slot machines across the province, to the VLTs. This will be an interesting bureaucracy.

You're going to be giving support orders priority over other debt judgements. I'm not a lawyer, but I think that when we take this to committee there will have to be some hard questions asked about these enforcement provisions. We have to understand that given the track record of the family support plan, SCOE before it, I would be very careful that you are going to get the right person and attack the right asset.

This really comes down to credibility. The government's credibility here is on the line. The government's credibility here is in tatters. They have revolutionized the province. They have become very good at blowing up institutions. They have been very good at laying off 290 experienced employees in places like Thunder Bay and Sudbury and the other regional centres that used to deal with this problem. They have been very bad at setting up a centralized office. They are right now, if you can believe it, still attempting to set this office up. As I understand it, there's a tender out right now calling for technology to support the centralized office. Can you believe it? Why would you have not tendered this in the spring? Why would you have not taken the measure to make this plan efficient before you closed the regional offices?

**Mr Gravelle:** Had to get some money.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Why would you do that? My friend from Port Arthur suggests it's about money. I suggest it's about money too, because no government with common sense would have done this. No government with a sense of how to do business would have done this. No government that cared about children would have done this. So what does that leave this government caring much about? I suggest to you it's about money. It's about a tax scheme that rewards you for being the president of a bank. That's what it's about. It's about a government that beats its chest and tells us how great the economy is when there are 57,000 more people unemployed this year than there were last. It's about a government that says it believes in deficit reduction. It's about a government that believes we should have a balanced budget and then go out and borrow, borrow, borrow in order to pay for a tax cut.

The people of Ontario should understand. They shouldn't listen to this government; they should watch what it does. If you watch what it does, it's going to borrow \$22 billion over its four years in power at the same time that it's claiming to be fiscally responsible. It's a government that isn't paying its bills but is saying to taxpayers, "You get our big spending program: our tax scheme." You know, it sounds an awful lot like buying our way out of a recession, that a former government, the past one, did — same thing. They were going to spend, and your spending program you've packaged up a little differently and called it a tax scheme. But essentially it is the same kind of crazy economics that the people of Ontario will pay for, not only during these next two or three years but for generations.

That's \$22 billion, and you're proud of it. You're proud you're going to borrow \$22 billion. I can't believe anybody could be proud of that. You're proud of the fact that you're borrowing in your first year in power more money than the Liberal administration borrowed between 1985 and 1990. You're proud of the fact that in one year you can borrow more than a previous administration borrowed in five. You're proud of the fact that you might in some distant future have a balanced budget, when the last balanced budget in Ontario was in 1989. And you're going to achieve your goals on the backs of the children and women of the province. This is not common sense; it sure is revolutionary.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments?

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I want to compliment the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for his edifying speech. I think he points out a lot of the historical significance to this issue that unfortunately the government backbench members refuse to acknowledge. Sitting here listening to the back benches of the government heckle the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, one quickly becomes aware of the fact that the reality is that many of those members don't know what they're talking about.

They do not know the history of what happened before 1987, what took place in 1987 in terms of the SCOE legislation that was brought in, what happened after that, what then led to the changes that we made and brought about the family support plan, which brought about many



of the changes that are in Bill 82, which, by the way, we have always said we will be supporting. They do not know, as has been pointed out by my colleague the former Attorney General, that much of what you're doing is a continuation of work we started, and much of the work we did was work that was started right after SCOE was brought in by the Liberals in 1987. That's the reality. 1710

What has caused all of the anger in this House on the part of the opposition is the action that was taken by the Attorney General on August 15 when he summarily shut down eight offices and laid off 290 staff and then caused all the resulting citizens of this province, vulnerable women and children who need those support payments, to lose the money they deserve. It's in the bank, and that's why we're so angry.

We are going to continue to point out that it's not in disagreement with the changes per se, but it's the actions of the Attorney General. And he still hasn't stood in his place and taken responsibility for the actions he's taken.

**Mr Clement:** I'd like to thank on behalf of our caucus the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for his contribution to this debate, which has been a fairly fair and frank discussion of the issues.

I share with the honourable member his concerns about untrammelled bureaucracy. As parliamentarians, surely all members of this House share that concern, that when a civil service, with the best of intentions perhaps, is given authority over something, there is proper oversight and control over their actions.

I agree with him in that respect, but I call to the honourable member's attention the record of the past few years. We are now at a point in the family support plan's history where there is \$1 billion of arrears, \$1 billion not getting out to the spouses and to the children who need that money. Surely there is no better reason for this Legislature to get involved than that. What we are trying to do, however, is to ensure that the bureaucracy and the machine that is running this particular plan is focused on precisely the issues that have to be solved.

That's why we're talking about tendering out, so that there's accountability with some private sector partners who can do the job better for less. That's why we're talking about the opt-out, so that those plans made by men and women who are operating responsibly and in the best interests of the family involved don't have to be part of a system that, quite frankly, hasn't worked very well in the past. Those two items will allow us to focus on the things that matter, the problem areas that have to be solved on behalf of the people of Ontario.

**Mr Gravelle:** I certainly want to compliment the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for his wise remarks. I think he echoed what a lot of people in the House feel.

What's really so very sad about all this is that it absolutely wasn't necessary. The truth is that many of the parts of this bill which I personally think are a very good idea, and I support those measures, are things that were put forward by the staff of the family support plan office themselves, the regional staff. They could be literally in place and using these measures to do the job better themselves. They put forward a 19-point streamlining plan to the minister. This plan was ignored, and the

reason it was ignored quite clearly is because they simply wanted to centralize the operation in Toronto. They wanted to get rid of 290 staff to meet their job cut goal.

The truth is, if they really cared about the women and children of this province and really cared about this plan, they could have put this bill forward and used the family support plan regional office staff to implement it so that people in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario, people in Sudbury and the regional area around that, could have access to some real people.

No matter what is said in this House, there are two things that the people of this province are not going to forget: (1) that they closed the offices of the regional plan in August and as a result absolutely shut off access to people to get to this plan, to speak to anybody at all; and (2) they put this bill forward on October 2, I believe, and then they waited 49 days to bring it forward. No matter what they say and no matter what anybody says, the fact is that they are still responsible for this extraordinary delay, and the fact is that there is no excuse and they should not be forgiven for that.

There was a way to solve this, there was a way to keep it going. There was no need for this horrible tragedy for the people of the province to take place. I call on the minister to apologize before this bill goes through.

**Ms Martel:** I want to commend my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin for his comments on this important legislation. There are a couple of things I want to pick up on. First is the fact that I have also been a member for nine years. The member for Algoma-Manitoulin and I were elected at the same time. I have always dealt with the SCOE or FSP.

I tell the members of the House again that never, ever have I seen the chaos in the family support plan that I have seen since this Attorney General decided it was okay to finance the tax cut on the backs of women and children and then decide to lay off 290 staff in a single day and close the eight regional offices.

In my office now we have over 105 cases since the end of August of women and children who used to receive regular support payments, whose husbands or ex-spouses have made payments and whose cheques have gone into the black hole of Downsview. That is what has happened. For all of you who want to say there have been historical problems and the plan has never worked, I am telling you as an MPP who has always been involved in this issue that we have never seen the kind of chaos that we have witnessed in the last number of months.

I ask the government members, if the plan was historically bad, if there was always a problem, why then would your Attorney General cause the disaster he has by laying off the experienced staff in the plan and by closing the regional office? What government in its right mind would attack women and children in that way?

The fact of the matter is, the Attorney General was warned by all of his staff, from front-line right to his senior management staff, that if he took the actions he did, he would cause chaos for women and children who used to be getting their payments.

This is all about this government financing the tax cut. The Attorney General is taking 35% of the funds from



the family support plan. He is laying off over 40% of his staff permanently. He has put women and children at risk, and he should have at least had the decency to accept responsibility for that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Algoma-Manitoulin, you have two minutes.

**Mr Michael Brown:** I appreciate the comments of the members. This problem is not an ideological one. It isn't one of high public policy. This is a problem of real people with real needs who need real help. It is a problem of administration and it is a problem of what I would characterize as callous indifference to the people in this province who are least able to protect themselves.

I cannot believe for one moment that the Attorney General did not know what the effect of this transition would be. I do not believe for one moment that the Harris government did not know what suffering it would inflict on women and children in this province. I do not believe this was a mistake. I firmly believe they knew exactly what they were doing.

I am most angered and offended by a government that is run by spin doctors who tell their members to get up on their feet and to stay on message, to blame the victim, to blame the opposition for holding up a bill they themselves did not move to second reading for 49 days. It is absolutely unacceptable to the people of Ontario for a government to deny responsibility.

1720

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Christopherson:** I'm pleased to have this opportunity to comment. One of the things I'm going to do during the 30 minutes that's allotted to me is to read into the record an analysis from the stats, as best we can get them, from the government that point out that the plan was making improvements in terms of the amount of money it was collecting and the amount of money it was providing to mainly the women and children in this province whose money it rightfully is and to show statistically that there was a major dropoff in the effectiveness of this plan from the moment the current Attorney General started to wield his axe indiscriminately in order to find the money he needs as part of his ministry's quota to pay for that tax cut, and I will read that into the record in a few moments.

I want to begin my remarks, however, by pointing out to those who are watching that when the government — I heard one of the other backbenchers speak the other day and I was quite enraged, I truly was, to hear him talk about the fact that when they came into office they talked to the front-line people about what changes need to be made in the plan. First of all, a lot of that work was already done. There's one major part of Bill 82 we have a problem with, the voluntary opting out. It's a significant piece but we aren't going to hold up this legislation for that one part, but we are going to hold the government's feet to the fire in terms of being accountable for that because it's going to cause serious problems. We know that.

But the fact is that this government did not consult with the front-line people. You not only didn't talk to them, you not only ignored them, you fired them. You outright fired them, and because of your ability now

under Bill 7 to not have to provide successor rights, at the end of the day most of those jobs will be privatized, the few jobs that are left, and they will go to a private bank, which will pay fewer wages, fewer benefits, and that's where they'll derive their profit. That's the reality of what this government did in terms of those front-line people, the front-line workers, and it fits with their overall plan.

We said from the outset when this government brought in that legislation that that was the name of the game. In this case we can point to it clearly and I am certain, unfortunately, that we'll be able to do that time and time again, to point out the fact that you disallowed those workers the right to keep their democratically chosen union and collective agreement so that your friends in the private sector could make a greater profit at the public expense and directly as a result of those workers not being paid what they're entitled to and not receiving the kind of benefits they're entitled to.

What I want to do now, because I want to make sure this is on the record — we are going into some public hearings next week and we want to make sure that this analysis is there for those who are coming in to look at it. Draw your own conclusions, but please take the time to read this because we have taken the time to look at the stats, to back up the argument we've made that the crisis created now by this Attorney General has caused a lot of hurt to vulnerable people and there's no way to justify that.

If I can, with your indulgence, Speaker — and I also want to point out, I'm sure you'd be interested to know, that the only months we could get are May and September and October. Interestingly enough, I'm advised by the member for London Centre, our critic, that we are unable to get June and July and August. Interesting that we can get May and we can get September and October, but we can't get those crucial — it's almost like Nixon's 18 minutes — we can't get the crucial part in between, which is the June, July and August statistics, and they are obviously important to both sides of the House.

The government doesn't want us to have those numbers because they know that it will verify the argument we're making and we're angry because we just want the truth to come out and not having those documents —

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** Huh.

**Mr Christopherson:** I hear the member for Bedrock scoffing over there. The reality is that when we do get those statistics, what I have now said will be borne out to be what I think the vast majority will see as the truth.

Let me then read into the record this analysis.

Caseload numbers under the current plan are expected to rise at 1,200 to 1,400 cases per month, this being the number of orders usually made by Ontario courts in any given month. Because the law currently requires that all orders be registered and enforced, a regular growth in caseload is a sign that the plan is working, not that it is broken.

But what do we see in the statistics provided by the ministry? Between September 21 and October 19, 1996, only 619 orders were added to the caseload, some 600 to 800 fewer cases than we ought to expect to have been added, given the ministry's figures of 1,200 to 1,400



cases per month. Between May 26 and September 21, a four-month period, the number of cases added to the plan was 3,871, whereas on average, over four months, 4,800 to 5,600 ought to have accrued. In other words, because of the actions of the Attorney General in closing down the regional offices before the new systems were in place, we know that many orders made in recent months have not been even registered by the plan and, of course, no enforcement is being done on those cases, in number at least 1,000 to 1,600 fewer than ought to have been acted upon under the current law.

Since part of the Attorney General's plan is to encourage recipients of family support to opt out of the plan, to lower the workload and to maximize the profits for a privatized operation, the failure of the plan to register and enforce these orders amounts to a deliberate effort to create a lack of confidence in the current plan. This will encourage recipients not to rely upon it for enforcement.

Compliance: Before the family support plan came into force on March 1, 1992, the plan collected \$14 million per month. By May 26, 1996, the last month for which we have statistics prior to the Attorney General's devastation of the plan, the plan collected \$44.9 million. By September 21, that amount had dropped to \$37.2 million; in October, only \$28.7 million were collected. Obviously, these figures clearly show that the actions of the Attorney General in closing the regional offices, firing 290 qualified and expert staff and making files unavailable to the temporary staff attempting to keep the plan working caused a disruption in the receipt of previously regular payments by recipients across the province. Even the amount paid to the treasury dropped dramatically from \$5.7 million in May 1996 to only \$3.6 million in September and \$3.7 million in October 1996.

The government has claimed that three out of four support payors are not fulfilling their responsibility. Those figures are not accurate. While it is true that full compliance, that is, regular payments as ordered with no arrears accumulated, were in May 1996 at only 24% overall, dropping incidentally to 22% in September 1996 and to only 20% in October 1996, that figure in no way explains what is actually happening in the plan. The real figure is that percentage of cases which have funds flowing regularly.

Flowing regularly means that the current amount of the order is being flowed and that an arrangement to pay down the accumulated arrears has been made and moneys are flowing to meet that obligation. Money was flowing regularly in May 1996 to 59% of recipients; in both September and October 1996 only 53% of cases saw a regular flow of money. That drop of 6% in recipients who receive regular payments meant the over 9,000 clients of the plan ceased to receive regular payments between May 1996 and October 1996. In other words, the Attorney General's cost-cutting measures resulted in over 9,000 families who either had received regular funds or were new members of the plan not receiving the money which they were entitled by court order to have.

Total arrears owing: In May 1996 \$905.7 million were the arrears owing under the plan. By September 1996 that amount had jumped to \$942.6 million, and by October to \$962.1 million, an increase over five months of \$56.4

million. This is a huge increase, much of which can be attributed directly to the actions of the Attorney General for destroying the plan. In the span of years since 1987, when the original SCOE plan was put in place, arrears had grown on average by \$8 million per month. Because many of the arrears date well before 1987, this figure is theoretical because a large accumulation of arrears existed on day one of the SCOE plan. But even allowing for that, the growth in arrears between May and October 1996 averages over \$11 million per month, a huge increase over the average growth, which is unexplained by anything other than the Attorney General's budget-cutting destruction of the current plan.

1730

It is interesting too to look at the distribution of arrears between the dollars owed to recipients and those owed to the province because of the assignment of social assistance. In May 1996 \$311.8 million was owed the treasury, by October \$313.6 million, an increase of less than \$2 million. Contrast this to the \$54.6-million increase in the amounts owed to recipients in the same period. The government is clearly expending what resources it still has to collecting government receipts, not to helping women and children obtain the dollars they require in order to live.

How can we be sure that this same disregard will not govern the closure of files if this bill passes? How can we have any confidence in the will of this government to make sure every file registered by the plan has the opportunity to be enforced, using the new tools of Bill 82, for a sufficient period of time to ensure it really is "uncollectible"? The implementation plan of the Attorney General is for files to be closed during the transition period, before the new systems and the new enforcement measures are in place.

This means that anywhere from \$450 million to \$500 million will be written off as not collectible by this government before the measures in this bill come into force. The government is telling thousands of women and children that their entitlement to support arrears does not matter, that they will see the possibility of the new trace-and-enforce measures snatched away from them. It is grossly unfair of this government to write off these arrears, to decide that it is too time-consuming and costly to collect.

Once this plan is based on profit, collection of arrears will cease to be based on the entitlement of the court order and will become based on whether or not the private company to which the plan is divested sees collection as cost-effective. The bill encourages non-payors to leave the jurisdiction, to make collection difficult and expensive long enough to ensure that the private company writes it off as uncollectible even though the money is owed not to the company, not to the government but to the recipients, usually the children and their mothers.

I realize not everyone has an interest in this issue. This may not be as riveting for those who do not have a professional or personal interest. But for those who do, this is a crucial issue, and I would urge particularly those who are planning to make public presentations to please review carefully the analysis we have provided today.



Draw your own conclusions, of course, but please don't just listen to the government rhetoric about the plan being broken, "They're fixing it and that's what Bill 82 is about and there's politics here slowing this down." Please take a look at the substantive issues that are at stake. This analysis, I believe, is a part of that.

I would also encourage those who are very serious about this issue to give a great deal of attention to the Hansard of November 21 and the speech in this House by my colleague the member for London Centre, who is not only our critic on this issue but is a former Attorney General of this province, and for the overwhelming length of time that we were in government, the minister responsible for women's issues. She goes into a great deal of detail that deserves to be considered when one is deciding whether to believe that the government does not have a responsibility to answer for the current crisis or whether the opposition in this case has made a bona fide case, that the facts hold up and that this government is running away from their responsibility and not acknowledging their culpability in all this.

When I talk of crisis being generated I think it's important that we constantly remember the words of the Minister of Education and Training before his handlers got hold of him and got him inside a tighter cocoon. People will recall that the Minister of Education was caught on video very early on in the life of this Mike Harris government, saying to a group of staff members within the ministry: "The way you deal with these issues, my friends," he said, "is to create a crisis. Make a situation so bad that everybody sees any change in it as an improvement."

Certainly as the labour critic for the New Democratic Party, I have seen this practice at work with regard to the WCB, and I know we've seen it at work with the Ministry of Health, where the minister swings one day from praising the system to the next day condemning it, depending on what suits him. But clearly this idea of creating a crisis is necessary in order to have a legitimate — or at least for it to seem that there's a legitimate front to take the dramatic and draconian actions that they have.

We've always maintained, with regard to the family support plan, with WCB, with the health care system, the education system, all the issues that are before us as a province, that there are problems, indeed serious problems. But there is no crisis, certainly not one to the extent that would warrant and legitimize and justify the hurt and harm that is being inflicted upon the most vulnerable people in this province: in this case, with regard to the discussion around Bill 82 and the actions of the Attorney General, women and children, the vast majority of whom are among those who are in our low-income categories; just this week the legislation around injured workers, attacking them; the absolutely outrageous and unfathomable action of cutting 22% last summer from the poorest of the poor.

None of the problems that face this province warrant that kind of action, certainly not while this government and its cronies sit back in the comfort of their high-income lifestyles and go further to collect tens of thousands and in some cases hundreds of thousands

of gift money in terms of income tax refund at a time when you're attacking the people I've mentioned so far. It's so horrific it's hard to believe you're doing it.

The only way that one will be able to put it properly in its scope is, unfortunately, through the vision of history. History will clearly show that you put Bennett to shame, you put Hepburn to shame in terms of what governments, both nationally and provincially, did during the last Depression, the other most severe economic times we've ever faced. When looked at in that light, you're going to look even worse.

What we find so objectionable is that this government first of all refuses to accept the fact that the current crisis, when I raised the issues of my constituents who were here yesterday — Helen Teepell, Sandra Dunsdon and Rick Hunter-Wolff were here yesterday. They took the time to come down and sit in the members' gallery, not 15 feet from where I stand, so that they could watch the government members, particularly the Attorney General, attempt to justify and defend the harm they've caused my constituents, when the reality is that before the Attorney General took his action in August they didn't have any problems.

That is what's so grossly unfair about what the government is attempting to do in terms of the position it's taken. You refuse to accept the fact that you shut down that system for the sole purpose of making sure the Attorney General's ministry could pay its quota to the Treasurer because you have to pay for your tax cut — \$5 billion a year that you have to borrow, over \$20 billion during the life of this government. That's why you did it, and you don't even have the decency or the guts to stand up and at least admit that that's what you're doing and that's why you did it.

You continue to pretend there's no problem. You talk about the fact that there are improvements needed in the family support plan and jump immediately to the wonderful world of the future and take no responsibility for the harm that you've done, for the disruption you've caused where there was none before. That's the crucial issue.

1740

In my community of Hamilton there's a new group being formed. They've called themselves Deadbeat Government — Payors and Payees Unite. They've got another meeting tonight. They had their founding meeting on November 14. As I mentioned yesterday, none of the Tories who were invited — and we have four Tories in our area of six seats, one New Democrat, one Lib, four Tories, and not a one showed up.

It's easy to understand on a personal level. Who wants to go to a meeting and get beat up? Fair enough to understand. But your responsibilities as an MPP go beyond that, and unfortunately, as a government backbencher you have a responsibility to carry the can for the decisions of your cabinet. Now, I'm the first one to admit how tough that is. In fact, I've often said that the toughest job in this place is a government backbencher. I've been there. I know what that's like. It's very difficult. However, that does not excuse nor allow government backbenchers to abdicate their responsibility to talk to their constituents.



I say the reason those Tories didn't show up is that they know they can't defend this. They'd rather take the kind of heat and pressure that I'm bringing right now in pointing out that they didn't show up than actually show up and take the heat and stand there, stammering, trying to defend the indefensible. The majority of examples given that night were clearly the result of actions this Attorney General had taken. None of those Tory MPPs wanted to be there and take the flak, because that's all they could do: stand there and take it. Instead, they hid and ran.

As I pointed out yesterday, that's not the first time. I've been at public meetings on rent control. They were invited, didn't show. I've met with injured workers. My colleague the Liberal member for Hamilton East was there. I realize it's a lot easier to be an opposition member in front of public meetings when people are angry. I understand that reality. But the fact of the matter is that you have a responsibility as a government member to be there none the less. You've got the power. You're sure as hell not afraid to wield it and use it when you want to go after people. You're quite comfortable standing here in your vast majority and ramming down the throats of the powerless in this province your hard, right-wing ideology. But in my community, the Tory MPPs haven't got the guts and the decency to show up at public meetings and defend those actions face to face to the citizens. That's the reality.

While I'm talking about government members, I'm advised that the member for Hamilton Mountain, Trevor Pettit, when there was some discussion about the staff that used to be there, those front-line staff you fired, heckled across the House, "Office in Hamilton was useless anyway."

Given the constant and continuing attack on workers and injured workers and workers' rights and the rights to have a union, it doesn't surprise me in the least. This is very consistent with the mindset of an awful lot of government backbenchers, because at the end of the day, that's what this is about: It's about making sure that tax cut can be funded and it's about making sure that the path is clear for the privatization of these services so that their pals can buy them up, snap them up, just as Mulroney did, and they can go ahead and make a profit, and they can make an even greater profit by ensuring that they don't have to respect the collective agreement, they don't have to pay decent wages, they don't have to pay benefits, they can pay the bare minimum possible.

As we know, they're moving the bare minimum down as much as they can. They've announced a freeze on minimum wage. It'll probably be a cold day in hell before they actually increase it. Recognizing that the Americans have already increased their minimum wage, we're now behind them. This government takes a great deal of pride in talking about how low the minimum wage is. And they're going to take great pride in pointing out how they've watered down environmental legislation and Employment Standards Act legislation, how difficult it is to organize a union —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I don't mean to jump in and interrupt the member. I believe we're debating Bill 82, the family support plan.

**Mr Christopherson:** I appreciate your comment, Speaker. I would suggest to you, however, that the whole issue of privatizing the family support plan and the firing of 290 members is in order, but I would ask you whether or not you believe I'm correct.

**The Speaker:** I just want to make sure that we're on topic in the debate. As long as you refer to the bill occasionally and discuss Bill 82, that's fine.

**Mr Christopherson:** Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate the correction, or at least the clarification. Indeed I am staying on topic because I do believe that the issue of privatization is a part of Bill 82 and it's a part of every major issue and initiative that this government will bring forward.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Christopherson:** You can howl all you want from the back benches. You're all nice and comfortable here in the House where no one can get at you, but I'd sure like to see you talk about this stuff the way you do here out there in the public. Let's see that one. Let's see you bring your arguments about how all you're doing is fixing the family support plan into a meeting of women and families who have been injured as a result of the actions you've taken. Let's see that. That's not happening because this government and the backbenchers know they can't defend it. In fact, I wouldn't be very surprised at all if there have been some rather interesting discussions in their caucus room.

We all make mistakes. Particularly those who have the privilege of serving as ministers will stand up and acknowledge those mistakes and take responsibility and do what they can to fix it. I know what it's like when there's a mistake made by a colleague and you have to defend it and live with it, and I'm sure you've had your discussions. I've got to believe that things are getting pretty warm in the Tory caucus room when you've got a minister who has decided his personal feelings about having to say, "I'm sorry, I screwed up and I'll fix it," are more important than your ability to go back into your riding and have any kind of credibility at all.

The fact is that what you did to this plan on August 15 of this year is indefensible. It would certainly be refreshing if one of you — one of you — would at least in some fashion show a little backbone and acknowledge that some of the problems that are caused now are your fault, because all the proof is there, but I suspect we won't see that. They've all been given their little typed speeches and they won't move too far from them; they're all scripted very tight. They're going to talk about the future and they're going to talk about the past. They will not talk about their culpability here because that would put them in trouble with the government.

When we talk about Bill 82, in the last minute and a half I have, I want to say again that it's our intention to support this bill, as we've said all along. I reject outright — rightly so, I think — the fact that we're playing any kind of political games, as has been pointed out. You waited 49 days from the time you introduced this bill until you called it for proper debate. How the hell can you say we're playing games when you waited 49 days? I'd like to know how you're going to argue that away to the general public. We even offered up unanimous



consent before the 49 days were up in order to debate it and again you wouldn't —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Members on the government side, I'd appreciate it if the heckling would be brought down somewhat. It's becoming very difficult. I caution the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale specifically.

**Interjection:** Awwwww.

**The Speaker:** I don't find that very humorous either. I would prefer if you came to order.

**Mr Christopherson:** Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate your concern for my ability to get my message out in terms of my rights as an opposition member.

I want to close my comments in the few seconds I have to say to this government that the only reason there are even voices being raised at all is because, first of all, we resent the fact that you're trying to say we've played political games with the timing of this bill. You waited 49 days before you brought this bill to the House to be debated, you denied unanimous consent to have it brought forward during that 49 days, and you still steadfastly refuse to accept the fact that the crisis right now in terms of women and children not receiving money that's legally theirs is your responsibility and the fault of your Attorney General. As long as you maintain that position, we'll continue to scream the truth from the rooftops.

1750

**The Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Tilson:** The member for Hamilton Centre, it's unbelievable that we'd go through this entire period of time — what is it — six days that we've been debating this bill in the House and finally the members of the third party are saying that they're going to accept the bill.

**Mrs Boyd:** No, it's not six days.

**Mr Bradley:** It's only been three days.

**Mr Tilson:** It hasn't been three days, it's been six days. We've been having six days of debate in this House, and all of a sudden now they say they're going to accept the bill. Well, I'm glad to hear that. I'm glad to hear from the member for Hamilton Centre that he's going to be accepting the bill and voting for the bill, because clearly we have had a problem in this province. We've had the problem that a decentralized system simply hasn't worked. No one over here is denying — you people say we're denying that we've had problems in our constituency offices. Of course we've had. We've had no choice but to change a system that didn't work.

We've explained all the problems. My goodness, as I repeat every time I stand up, 8,000 pieces of correspondence per day comes to the offices. You haven't been able to handle that. There have been 50,000 telephone calls per day, and only a small percentage, I think 6% of those, have you been able to answer. The process you created hasn't worked.

Yes, we've had to completely redo the system. Why? Because there was no way the decentralized system was going to work. You realized that. In fact, I'm amazed, as you over in the third party were in power and you chose during that time not to do anything about it. You started something in 1992. I think Mr Hampton, the leader of the third party, introduced a bill which made it universal. The

universal process hasn't worked, and we're going to change that. A number of people in this system know they simply don't want to be part of the system, feel they can do it themselves, can agree. If anything, you've created more dissension among parties who are trying to resolve their matrimonial difficulties. We're going to solve all those problems.

**Mr Bradley:** I enjoyed the member's speech because it brought to the attention of the public of Ontario, through the television station that we're on, the many accurate facts about the problem that's before us today with family support. I'm glad we have this televised service, because they wouldn't learn about this in the Pelham newspaper — a newspaper that has been in existence for some 20 years, a newspaper that's making money — because Conrad Black bought the newspaper and now he's closing it down. We're not going to be able to read about things like this that affect this bill.

I was startled when I heard that it had been 49 days between the time the government introduced this bill and actually decided to proceed with the bill. Here I was, under the impression that the government was eager to get it passed, and indeed a lot of people want to see many of these provisions in place, and I found out that the government had waited 49 days.

I don't know if that was in the information that was provided to the Conservative caucus. I don't think it was. They got up and they were in a panic and they launched a counter-offensive, even though there had been problems in all their constituency offices and their own staff is overworked, the staff of the family support office is beside itself from the onerous responsibilities it has day after day. I have the sheets for today from my constituency office: seven pages, the majority family support problems being brought to my attention, because the government has botched this particular matter, all because it wants to have a tax cut and it wants to save money in one area. It closes some offices and of course tries to consolidate centrally and botches the whole thing.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I want to congratulate my colleague from Hamilton Centre for his remarks with regard to Bill 82, the family responsibility bill, and to point out that in his response to my colleague's comments, my friend from Dufferin-Peel still could not bring himself to admit that not only, as all of us concede, have there been long-standing problems with SCOE and then with the family support plan, but that those problems have been exacerbated and made worse by what this government has done over the summer and the fall.

The fact is that the government did not bring any measures forward for transition. They took the position that they had to centralize the operation. I debate that, but even if they take their position, they made no provision for a transition period. They just fired the people who knew how to do it, they didn't have the office in place, they left everything in boxes, and children and women who had been getting their support payments now found that they weren't, and fathers, mainly fathers, who were under court orders to pay and were paying and always had paid — not people who had been in default, but people who had paid because they care about their kids and they were complying with the orders — found that



their money was going out but it wasn't getting to their kids and it was disappearing into that black hole at Downsview.

The suggestion has been made that this has been held up in this House. All I can say is that the government must have lost this bill in one of those boxes in Downsview, because it took them 49 days to bring it before the House.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I wish I could agree with my friend and colleague the member for St Catharines when he stands in this place and says he's glad that we have television of these proceedings, because in commenting on the speech by the member for Hamilton Centre, I would like to express one expression of remorse and perhaps guilt.

You see, I sat on the committee and I have a feeling the member for St Catharines sat on that Legislative Assembly committee with me in 1985 when we reviewed the option of introducing television cameras into this place. Frankly, other than the fact that, yes, it is a good communications tool, I often have thought that the level of debate in this chamber was not enhanced by the introduction of these five cameras in this chamber. I think we have just had that very fully demonstrated, because I happen to believe that the language used by the member for Hamilton Centre was unparliamentary and I don't think we'd have quite that demonstration and bravado if we didn't have the cameras in the chamber. I wish I could agree with the member for St Catharines about the cameras in the chamber. I also wish the member for Hamilton Centre would refrain from using unparliamentary language.

**The Speaker:** Response, the member for Hamilton Centre.

**Mr Christopherson:** Let me just say to the member for Mississauga South that I think it would be a lot more credible on her part if she were concerned about the thousands of women and children who have been hurt by the actions of her Attorney General rather than worrying about whether I said the word "hell" in my speech when I was trying to point out the fact that it's her Attorney General who did that.

I would also suggest to her that if she's not keen on the way cameras are being used in messaging, let's go back and look at some of the questions and the way you framed them around the film review board. Let's just remember some of the things that you said and the way you said them. So get off your high horse and get down to reality and deal with what's happening to these people, because that's what we're trying to do.

I want to thank the members for St Catharines and Algoma for their supportive comments — very much appreciated.

As regards the comments of the member for Dufferin-Peel, unfortunately for him, this ever-popular member continues to add misinformation on top of misinformation. I said the first day we began discussing this that we would indeed be supporting this bill, so for him to stand up and say as his first comment that he's glad we finally decided we're going to support this — I'm paraphrasing. The fact is that we had already made that very clear. You

were obviously grasping for something and that's the best you could come up with, and you couldn't even come up with something that was accurate.

The fact is we've said all along that we would support this. We offered unanimous consent to support it during the 49 days, when you felt that passing VLT legislation was more important than dealing with Bill 82. So don't give us this pious nonsense that you care more about the women and children who are affected than we do. The reality is that you've made it worse for people and the fact of the matter is that you refuse to take responsibility. Shame on you.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Orillia):** We just have one minute before this House adjourns. I want to say that while I support this bill in principle, I have some serious concerns about provisions of the bill. I will yield the floor now so that we can have the vote, but I'm looking forward to both committee and third reading on this bill to see if it has been fixed.

**The Speaker:** Any further debate?

Mr Harnick has moved second reading of Bill 82. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** The standing committee on the administration of justice.

**The Speaker:** Referred to the standing committee on justice.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** I have the weekly business statement. Pursuant to standing order 55, I wish to indicate the business of the House for the week of December 2.

On Monday, December 2, we plan to complete second reading of Bill 86 and third reading of Bill 57.

On Tuesday, December 3, we plan to complete committee of the whole House consideration of Bills 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68 and 69, and to complete third reading of Bill 81.

On Wednesday, December 4, we plan to complete both second and third readings of Bill 93 and second reading of Bill 84.

On Thursday, December 5, we plan to discharge the order of Bill 52 for third reading and refer the bill to committee of the whole House and will then consider the bill in committee of the whole House.

We also plan on Thursday, December 5, to complete third reading of Bills 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68 and 69 and to complete second and third readings of Bill 95 and, finally, to complete second reading of Bill 92.

I know this whole House shares my enthusiasm for that agenda.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Well, that certainly is an ambitious week. It now being after 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1802.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD  
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell  
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries  
Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Burlington South / -Sud	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Carleton	<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b> (PC) Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b> (PC) Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	London North / -Nord	<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne</b> (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Comwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Don Mills	<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Markham	<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b> (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamarie (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b> (PC) Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Durham West / -Ouest	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet</b> (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	Nepean	Baird, John R. (PC)
Eglinton	<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William</b> (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme	Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nickel Belt	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Nipissing	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.</b> (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Speaker / Président	Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Oriole	Caplan, Elinor (L)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaitre, Bernard (L)
Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)	Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)	Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L)
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Ottawa West / -Ouest	Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)	Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Parry Sound	<b>Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.</b> (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	Victoria-Haliburton	<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Waterloo North / -Nord	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b> (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Wellington	Amott, Ted (PC)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Isabel (PC)	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)	Willowdale	<b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles</b> (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
St George-St David	<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Samia	Boushy, Dave (PC)	Windsor-Riverside	Cooke, David S. (ND)
Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
Scarborough-Ellesmere	<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b> (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs	York Mills	Turnbull, David (PC)
		York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ron Johnson  
Marion Boyd, Robert Chiarelli, Sean G. Conway,  
Ed Doyle, Garry J. Guzzo, Tim Hudak,  
Ron Johnson, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston,  
Gerry Martiniuk, John L. Parker, David Ramsay,  
David Tilson, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Alvin Curling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Joseph Cordiano  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Jim Brown,  
Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Joseph Cordiano,  
Alvin Curling, Brenda Elliott, Morley Kells,  
Peter Kormos, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Frank Sheehan,  
Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Ted Chudleigh  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tim Hudak  
Ted Arnott, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown,  
Annamarie Castrilli, Ted Chudleigh,  
Douglas B. Ford, Tim Hudak, Monte Kwinter,  
Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips,  
Gilles Pouliot, Joseph Spina, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Jack Carroll  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bart Maves  
Jack Carroll, Harry Danford, Jim Flaherty,  
Bernard Grandmaître, Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese,  
Bart Maves, Sandra Papatello, Lillian Ross,  
Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona,  
Len Wood, Terence H. Young  
Clerk / Greffière: Lynn Mellor

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo  
Rick Bartolucci, Bruce Crozier, Ed Doyle,  
Douglas B. Ford, Gary Fox, Michael Gravelle,  
Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren,  
Gary L. Leadston, Dan Newman, Peter L. Preston,  
Tony Silipo, Bob Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Ted Arnott  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Hastings  
Ted Arnott, Rick Bartolucci, Dave Boushy, Tony Clement,  
Carl DeFaria, Bill Grimmett, John Hastings, Ron Johnson,  
Frank Michals, Gilles E. Morin, John R. O'Toole,  
Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John L. Parker  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tom Froese  
Elinor Caplan, Carl DeFaria, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese,  
Doug Galt, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Rosario Marchese, Margaret Marland, John L. Parker,  
R. Gary Stewart, Bill Vankoughnet, Len Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Dalton McGuinty  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mike Colle  
Marcel Beaubien, Dave Boushy, Gary Carr,  
Mike Colle, Bruce Crozier, Brenda Elliott,  
Gary Fox, Steve Gilchrist, John Hastings,  
Gerard Kennedy, Shelley Martel, Dalton McGuinty,  
Gilles Pouliot, Toni Skarica  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Smith  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Dave Boushy, John Hastings,  
Tony Martin, John R. O'Toole, Trevor Pettit,  
Sandra Papatello, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Tony Ruprecht,  
Mario Sergio, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Resources development /  
Développement des ressources**

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Barbara Fisher  
John R. Baird, Jack Carroll, David Christopherson,  
Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Dwight Duncan,  
Barbara Fisher, Steve Gilchrist, Pat Hoy,  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Bart Maves, Bill Murdoch,  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Président: Richard Patten  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Gerretsen  
David S. Cooke, Tom Froese, John Gerretsen,  
Michael Gravelle, Helen Johns, W. Leo Jordan,  
Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Julia Munro,  
Richard Patten, Trevor Pettit, Peter L. Preston,  
Lillian Ross, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

## **TABLE DES MATIÈRES**

**Jeudi 28 novembre 1996**

### **AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT**

#### **PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

##### **Loi de 1996 modifiant le Code**

**de la route**, projet de loi 78, *M. Hoy*

Adoptée . . . . . 5426

##### **Loi de 1996 modifiant la Loi de 1996**

**sur le consentement aux soins de**

**santé (consultation parentale),**

projet de loi 91, *M. Klees*

Rejetée . . . . . 5426

### **QUESTIONS ORALES**

#### **Service de Traduction**

*M. Bisson* . . . . . 5439

*M. David Johnson* . . . . . 5439

### **DEUXIÈME LECTURE**

#### **Loi de 1996 sur les obligations**

**familiales et l'exécution**

**des arriérés d'aliments,**

Projet de loi 82, *M. Harnick*

Adoptée . . . . . 5463



# CONTENTS

Thursday 28 November 1996

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1996, Bill 78, *Mr Hoy*

Mr Hoy	5411, 5418
Mrs Boyd	5412
Mr Ouellette	5413
Mr Miclash	5414
Mr Christopherson	5414
Mrs Marland	5415
Mr Bartolucci	5416
Mr Bisson	5417
Mr Shea	5418
Mr Michael Brown	5418
Agreed to	5426

### Health Care Consent Amendment Act (Parental Consultation), 1996, Bill 91, *Mr Klees*

Mr Klees	5418, 5425
Mrs Caplan	5420
Mrs Boyd	5420
Mrs Johns	5421
Mr Agostino	5422
Ms Churley	5423
Mrs Marland	5424
Mrs Papatello	5424
Mr Guzzo	5425
Ms Lankin	5425
Negated	5426

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Senior citizens</b>	
Mr Sergio	5426
<b>Planning Act amendments</b>	
Ms Lankin	5427
<b>Job creation</b>	
Mr Grimmett	5427
<b>Omnibus legislation</b>	
Mr Curling	5427
<b>Plea bargaining</b>	
Mr Kormos	5428
<b>Educational donation</b>	
Ms Bassett	5428
<b>Ontario film industry</b>	
Mr Gravelle	5428
<b>Earth Works</b>	
Mr Hudak	5428

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Economic statement</b>	
Mrs McLeod	5433, 5434
Mr David Johnson	5433, 5434, 5435
Mr Hampton	5435
<b>Environmental policy</b>	
Mr Hampton	5436
Mr Sterling	5436

## Development charges

Mr Colle	5437
Mr Leach	5437

## Transportation for the disabled

Ms Lankin	5437
Mr Palladini	5437

## Loan brokers

Mr O'Toole	5438
Mr Tsubouchi	5438

## Obstetrical care

Mrs Papatello	5438
Mr Wilson	5438

## Translation services

Mr Bisson	5439
Mr David Johnson	5439

## Northern Ontario

Mr Chudleigh	5439
Mr Hodgson	5439

## Plea bargaining

Mr Bradley	5440
Mr Harnick	5440
Mr Kormos	5441

## Casino Niagara

Mr Hudak	5441
Mr Saunderson	5441

## Highway safety

Mr Miclash	5441
Mr Hodgson	5441

## MOTIONS

### Standing committee on administration of justice

Mr David Johnson	5441
Agreed to	5442
Mr David Johnson	5442
Agreed to	5442

## PETITIONS

### Workers' compensation

Mr Cleary	5442
-----------	------

### Education financing

Ms Churley	5442
Mr Silipo	5443

### Public libraries

Mr Grimmett	5442
Mr Ouellette	5443
Mr Fox	5443

### School boards

Mr Crozier	5442
------------	------

### Fire safety

Mr Bartolucci	5443
---------------	------

### Family support plan

Mr Christopherson	5443
Mr Tilson	1533
Ms Martel	1535

## Education accommodation

Mrs Caplan	5443
------------	------

## Land-lease communities

Mr O'Toole	5444
------------	------

## Social services

Mr Sergio	5444
-----------	------

## Occupational health and safety

Mr Christopherson	5444
-------------------	------

## Services for the disabled

Mr Gravelle	5445
-------------	------

## Affordable housing

Mrs Elliott	5445
-------------	------

## FIRST READINGS

### Huronia Airport Commission Act, Bill P68, *Mr Grimmett*

Agreed to	5445
-----------	------

## SECOND READINGS

### Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996

Bill 82, *Mr Harnick*

Mr Kormos	5445
Mr Tilson	5449, 5462
Mr Michael Brown	5449, 5451
5453, 5457	

Ms Martel	5449, 5452, 5457
-----------	------------------

Mr Ron Johnson	5450, 5452
----------------	------------

Mrs Fisher	5450, 5453
------------	------------

Mr Gravelle	5452, 5457
-------------	------------

Mr Christopherson	5456, 5458, 5463
-------------------	------------------

Mr Clement	5457
------------	------

Mr Bradley	5462
------------	------

Mr Wildman	5462
------------	------

Mrs Marland	5462
-------------	------

Mrs Caplan	5463
------------	------

Agreed to	5463
-----------	------

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Visitors

Mr Hudak	5429
The Speaker	5429

### Leader of the Opposition

Mr David Johnson	5429
Mr Hampton	5430
Mr Bradley	5430
Mrs McLeod	5431

### Business of the House

Mr David Johnson	5463
------------------	------

*continued overleaf*

CA 20N  
X1  
-023

Gouvernement  
Publication



No. 131A

N° 131A

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 2 December 1996

Lundi 2 décembre 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 2 December 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 2 décembre 1996

*The House met at 1332.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I'm proud to be the first speaker in the House to congratulate Dalton McGuinty, our new Liberal leader. I have known Dalton for many years and we share riding boundaries in Ottawa. I'm confident we'll all find in him a strong and compassionate Liberal leader and a future Premier of Ontario.

### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I note that the Minister of Education has extended the consultation deadline for the high school reform to January 2, 1997. Even so, many of my constituents as well as parents across this province are still unhappy. They are unhappy with the process and the content of the consultations held by the ministry.

The high school reform initiative has incredible ramifications throughout the system and will affect the system for the next 10 years or so. Many parents of children currently in grade 7 are worried at the moment.

Parent Diane Van Abbe of Toronto wrote to me and she says:

"I am a mother of three children in elementary school. The oldest is in grade 7, a very vulnerable position" to be in at the moment. "If the proposed high school education reform takes place, he will be graduating with the children who are in grade 8 this year — double the amount of high school graduates in one year! At a recent public forum meeting, the question was asked: 'Have the universities/colleges been made aware of this fact? How are they preparing for this? What plan does the board of education have in place to deal with this problem?' The answer was 'None.'"

Many parents and teachers are unhappy with the reduced classroom time for English, especially for high school students currently enrolled in ESL and wishing to go on to college or university. I share their disappointment as well.

### WORLD AIDS DAY

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** As an honorary patron of a community organization, Voices of Positive Women, I'm pleased today to rise in the House and make a statement with respect to World AIDS Day.

December 1 is a day of celebration for people living with HIV/AIDS as well as a day of remembrance for those who have died in Canada and worldwide.

As of July 1996, UNAIDS estimated that there were over 22 million people currently living with HIV/AIDS with over five new infections each minute. In Canada over 14,000 AIDS cases had been reported to Health Canada's Laboratory Centre for Disease Control by September 1996, and when adjusted for reporting delay and underreporting, this number rises to over 20,000. This does not include those who are HIV positive and have not yet progressed to AIDS.

I want to urge the federal government to respond to the community's cry for renewal of the national AIDS strategy. Most people will know that the national AIDS strategy will run out — phase 2 in March 1997 — and there has been no commitment from the federal government to renew its funding to support for this important area of research and coordination with respect to this disease.

Certainly, under the circumstances of the expansion of this disease and the infection rates, we know it doesn't make sense that Canada will be abandoning its efforts to deal with HIV/AIDS. Our main hope for World AIDS Day is that the national AIDS strategy is renewed and I add my voice to join with the community to call for that.

### SLOW-MOVING VEHICLES

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** As you know, Bill 176, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to Slow Moving Vehicle Signs, came into effect yesterday on December 1. This act makes changes which, among others, will require vehicles that cannot maintain the speed of at least 40 kilometres an hour to use a slow-moving vehicle sign, including roadbuilding equipment, horse-drawn carriages and farm and antique vehicles.

People have been calling for these improvements for many years in order to increase the safety of those who travel Ontario roads.

Mrs Morgan has travelled from Brighton today to be present in the Legislature on the day these amendments to the Highway Traffic Act come into effect. She watches today, as a representative of some 20 years of dedication through the Ontario Farm Safety Association, dedication to better road safety laws in Ontario for all who travel here.

I would ask the honourable members today to carry this important message to their constituents: If you see the red and orange triangular sign which designates a slow-moving vehicle, please reduce your speed, stay well back, proceed with caution and pass only when it is safe to do so.



Having said this, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge the commitment of Mrs Patricia Morgan, president of the Ontario Farm Safety Association. Please join me in welcoming Mrs Morgan here today.

### SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the members of this House and the government for their unanimous support last Thursday of my private member's bill to protect Ontario school children riding school buses. I owe a debt of gratitude to the thousands of supporters of my bill in every community in the province who have lobbied the government on my behalf to get the tough measures contained in this bill implemented, as well as the Ontario School Bus Association, the Ontario police association, the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, and many, many school boards, municipalities and groups, all of whom raised public awareness of the problem.

Most particularly, I want to thank Larry and Colleen Marcuzzi for their selfless commitment to this cause. Their courage is an inspiration to us all.

The next hurdle is to have my bill scheduled for committee and brought back to this House for third reading and royal assent. I have already spoken with many of the organizations and individuals supporting my bill and they are poised and ready to begin the campaign to ensure that Bill 78 is passed quickly.

I look forward to working with the government and the minister, Mr Palladini, to accomplish this and improve child safety in Ontario.

### TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** Tomorrow, December 3, we celebrate International Day of Disabled Persons. Unfortunately, this will not be a day of celebration for disabled tenants across this province if the government's proposed Tenant Protection Act is passed. There are three areas of concern to tenants with disabilities.

First, the loss of rent control will mean huge shortages of accessible units. Without rent control, the few limited units that do exist will be in great demand and landlords know that where there is little supply exorbitant rents can be charged.

Second is the question of tenants living in care homes. The proposed tribunal to be set up to deal with landlord and tenant matters would be making decisions about the adequacy of tenant health care, and that is clearly not their area of expertise. If a disabled tenant lives in a care home and the landlord decides the tenant needs more services than the landlord can provide, that tenant can be evicted.

The third concern is that the proposals will make it possible for landlords or property owners to demolish care homes or convert these apartments to condominiums without municipal approval. What a blow to any tenant, let alone a disabled tenant. The tenant must now start to search for another apartment, one that will probably take him or her farther away from family, caregivers and support workers.

Without a doubt, the new Tenant Protection Act will surely compromise the rights of tenants with disabilities. It is an outright crime to subject disabled tenants to this type of anguish and indeed discrimination, and I urge the government to scrap their proposed legislation.

### DRINKING AND DRIVING

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** The holiday season RIDE program began last weekend. This year, our police officers have a powerful new tool to help them. Now drivers' licences are automatically suspended for 90 days if a certified breathalyser test finds the driver's blood alcohol level to be over the legal limit. On November 29, the first day when administrative driver's licence suspension was in effect, 53 Ontario drivers received 90-day licence suspensions.

It already appears that ADLS is making people think twice before they drink and drive. In Metro Toronto only seven drivers received 90-day suspensions in the first three days of the RIDE program, compared with 21 drivers who were charged with impaired driving in the same three-day period last year.

While ADLS is an effective deterrent against impaired driving, it is just the beginning. I look forward to the passage of my private member's Bill 85, which will require education and treatment, lengthens licence suspensions and permanently revokes the licences of drivers who have repeatedly committed this crime. We still need tougher measures against the hard-core, repeat offenders who commit the majority of impaired driving offences.

I too welcome the new leader of the official opposition, Dalton McGuinty.

1340

### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** On Thursday I was fortunate to be able to participate in an environment rally which was held outside the Minister of Environment's office. We were all dismayed to see that the Minister of Environment himself was not present and chose not to address the groups which arrived to tell the minister what we have been saying for some time, that this Conservative government is paying absolutely no heed to what the environmentalists in Ontario are saying about the changes they are making to the environment laws in Ontario.

As a member who comes from Windsor, I can tell you that it took a Liberal minister during a Liberal government to get scrubbers on the incinerator in Detroit on Zug Island. When you come from my part of Ontario, it is critical to see what kind of environment laws you need in the province of Ontario.

We are very disappointed that while everyone took their time during a busy schedule in the cold weather on Thursday to participate, to speak with the minister, the minister himself couldn't take the time to meet and speak with the people who are truly concerned. We must say too that while it was snowing and cold, he really should have taken the time to explain why he is changing the assessment rules, why he is changing it so that companies

which really are the bad apples in that business are not going to be told to toe the line for the environment in Ontario.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** The Sudbury Health Services Restructuring Report is fundamentally flawed. It has neglected to take into account Sudbury's unique nature of health care. It will cripple Sudbury's ability to act as a health care referral centre and jeopardize both the quality of care and the range of services offered by Sudbury's hospital system.

The member for Sudbury East and I have made recommendations which we believe will enhance this report and subsequently help the constituents of the Sudbury region. I hope the Harris government has the common sense to heed our advice and pursue the changes that are needed to this report.

First, the new system the report provides is critically undersized and does not have the flexibility and capacity required to meet the real needs of Sudbury and north-eastern Ontario. Secondly, the commission must come clean as to the number of staff layoffs expected. A labour adjustment plan must be clearly outlined to the employees. Once this is done, the numbers will show the devastating impact layoffs will have on patient care.

Furthermore, the report ignores the subject of community-based care, transitional care and home care. The implementation time line is too fast, too arbitrary and is arguably unworkable. Finally, the operational savings must be reinvested into Sudbury's community.

The current recommendations combined with the absence of leadership from the minister have created a crisis of confidence in the future of hospital care in Sudbury.

### WORLD AIDS DAY

**Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York):** Members of this House know that yesterday was World AIDS Day. I am pleased to be able to reiterate this government's and the Ministry of Health's five-part plan to combat HIV and AIDS.

First, we have announced a reinvestment of \$2 million to begin an HIV viral load testing program which has already begun and will be fully operational by the new year.

Second, between June 1995 and July 1996, we spent more than \$11 million to provide HIV and AIDS patients with important AIDS drugs. This is approximately \$5 million more than the previous year.

Third, we have taken steps to reduce the amount of paperwork that doctors had to complete, to give people easier access to promising new AIDS-related drugs by placing them on the facilitated access list. The slashing of red tape and paperwork ensures that these drugs are more readily available to the people who need them most.

Fourth, we have maintained funding for community-based AIDS programs. This allows communities to operate programs that meet their needs, such as counselling and education.

Finally, we have asked the federal Minister of Health to extend the national AIDS strategy. This plan demonstrates this government's commitment to people living with HIV and AIDS.

### LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I beg to inform the House that Mr Dalton J.P. McGuinty, member for the electoral district of Ottawa South, is recognized as leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I wonder if we might have unanimous consent to say a few words about the new leader. He doesn't have a pension any more, but he got a—

**The Speaker:** The Premier seeks unanimous consent. Agreed? Premier.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I do want to take the opportunity to say a few words of congratulations to the member for Ottawa South. It was with a great deal of interest for those of us who have been through this experience not just to watch the weekend but to reflect upon, in many cases, years and months of campaigning and of travelling the province and, as you get closer, long months and long days and long hours. I can say this, that I don't think the late bedtime phased any of the honourable candidates for leader and I think it showed, and my congratulations for that.

I want to congratulate particularly all the members of the Liberal Party who put their names forward as candidates this past weekend. I know that having spent these past months on the hustings, you'll have many cherished memories, all of you. You'll have renewed insight, I believe, into this great province of Ontario. You will have found many solutions to the problems, more so than there can possibly be. I know that from travelling the province myself. Particularly during leadership and particularly in opposition there are lots of ideas out there, but there are a lot of great people in this province of Ontario and you've had the opportunity to meet them.

To the honourable member for Ottawa South, you've been charged with an important responsibility. There will be some emotional debate, there will be demands from the Chair to come to order, it may seem as if questions you ask have no definitive answer, but then when your caucus meeting is finally over, you will have to come to question period and to the Legislature. I say that because I've been there. I've been there in opposition and I've been there in government.

I was interested to learn that you are the first leader of the Liberal Party to come from eastern Ontario since George Perry Graham in 1907. Mr Graham served for only nine months as leader back then because he left Ontario politics to take a position in the cabinet of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. I'm not sure of the significance of that precedent. I'm going to leave it to others to draw their own conclusions.

But in all seriousness to the Legislature, I want to say, Leader, that we have served together in this place for six years. We've come to know you as someone who has a strong commitment to your family — and I offer my congratulations today to your family — that you have a



wide range of interests, both political and personal, a popular profile and commitment to the people you represent in Ottawa South and now the challenge, of course, to take that across the province.

1350

I was interested to read in the *Star* this morning about how the availability of preprinted lawn signs was an important factor in seeking this office in the first place and the decision to follow in the footsteps of your late father as the MPP for Ottawa South. I might say to you, as the younger half of a successful father-son combination, you set a good example for my son Mike Jr who, I have to tell you, on many occasions thinks the name is a drawback. Not every day in the school grounds has he thought this was a positive thing.

I want to say directly to you that, having been elected leader of my party just a very short six years ago, I understand the challenges you're going to be facing today. Your expectations are limitless, the demands on your time are endless, your office is phoneless, and you will find quite a significant change. You will need your family to help you with that change; you will need your friends to help you with that change. There will be some difficult adjustments. You and your family will face many challenges; some will be very exciting, some will be very difficult as you all adjust now to a different way of living.

I say to all members of the House, and the leader of the New Democratic Party I'm sure is beginning to understand this, that it is different and it does change. It's especially true, I would say, representing a riding that is not within the same commute distance from Queen's Park as many members of the House have. That adjustment is even more difficult as well for a family.

I want to say that I look forward to what I know will be many lively exchanges in this Legislature. I think that conflict of ideas and of competing visions for the direction of our province are what bring the vitality, the vibrancy to the political process in our parliamentary democracy that we cherish and that I believe this great province is very fortunate to enjoy. Congratulations and welcome to you on this, your very first day in the Legislature as Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I would also like to congratulate the member for Ottawa South on his election as leader of the Liberal Party and the official opposition. I can say that the member for Ottawa South and I have something in common: We went to the same law school. He predated me by a couple of years. I know he and I share many of the same friends in the Ottawa legal community. Unfortunately, too many of them are Liberals. But we'll have our chance to talk about that and I'm sure even argue about it.

I knew his father. I, in fact, had the privilege of serving on committee with his father when I was first elected to this House. His father brought a delightful sense of humour to everything we did in this House. I would say to you that you will need some of your father's sense of humour in the weeks and months to come.

Like many of you, I stayed up very late Saturday night watching for the results on television. I can say to you

I've never watched so much Hockey Night in Canada in my life. It wasn't until 2:30 that I couldn't make it any more, so I already appreciate your stamina and your capacity to work.

I want to wish you good fortune with your caucus. You will have work to do there. I also wish you good fortune in getting some answers from the government when we do come to question period. I would say to you that I know that all of the Irish of the Ottawa Valley have been celebrating not just Saturday night but are probably still celebrating, knowing something about that community and all the towns of the Ottawa Valley, which I'm sure are all very proud of you. I've had a few telephone calls from friends of mine in Ottawa who tell me that everyone is happy and everyone there congratulates you.

I think it's important for our democratic institutions to go through the kind of process you have gone through. I know from talking with your caucus colleagues that this has been a long, hard march and that you have earned your position after much long, hard work.

I look forward to our relationship both here in the Legislature and on the hustings. I'm sure it's going to prove to be a very interesting one. Congratulations.

**The Speaker:** The leader of the official opposition.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I want to thank the Premier and the leader of the third party for their kind remarks. I'll cherish them especially because I assume they'll be the last until the date of my retirement.

We had a very exciting convention, as every one of you will have heard by now. It took us into the wee hours, the late hours of the morning, 5:30, 6 o'clock, until the final results were announced. I want to advise members who did not have the opportunity to see it on TV that it's out on video. The abridged version is available in a 15-volume set. If you can believe it, we've got films of the caucus doing the macarena. You may have seen my macarena. It's sort of like Al Gore's but not quite as colourful.

I want to take the opportunity to thank all the candidates who participated in the race. They have all been strengthened in their capacity as public representatives. The Premier made reference to this, but one of the things the race does is that it requires you to vacate Queen's Park. From time to time, of course, we get caught up in everything that goes on in here, and there's no doubt that what we do here is important public business, but sometimes there's a marked difference between that and what's important, what's on the minds of people at their doorstep and when you get to meet them in cafeterias, in church basements and wherever we could pull a group of people together to speak with them. It's an invigorating experience to get out there and get plugged into what people are thinking and bring that back with us, and I think we're all better armed and better able to deal with the issues we address in here.

Politics for me remains an honourable profession, and reference was made to my father, who sat here between 1987 and 1990. I grew up as one of 10 children at home, but one of the things he used to impress upon all of us was that we had an obligation, that it wasn't good enough simply to get up in the morning, go to work and pay



taxes, that if the opportunity should ever present itself, even if the opportunity did not present itself, "Find an avenue, find an outlet to serve your community."

I am delighted to have the privilege of serving the greater community of Ontario and I'm honoured to have the support of all my caucus members. I'm excited about the future. I'm especially proud to serve as leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, a party with a long and distinguished tradition in our province. I look forward to engaging you, Mr Premier, and your colleagues in debate during the course of this session and I look forward, of course, to forming the government in 1999.

I want just for one moment to say hello to some of the members of my family sitting in the gallery — there are only 28 members of my immediate family here today — who have been there for me throughout this undertaking. I have relied on them for advice, inspiration and support, and without them I simply could not have done it.

*Applause.*

**Mr McGuinty:** Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** Just as an anecdote, I was out Saturday as well and I knew it was going late because I phoned home and my son answered the phone. I said, "Run downstairs and tell me who's winning the Liberal leadership convention." He came back and said, "Vancouver." I said I'd never heard of him, but "Good luck."

1400

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### CHILD POVERTY

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. Child poverty is a big problem in Ontario, and you and your government are doing nothing about it. Compared to other provinces, we have the greatest number of children living in poverty, a staggering 350,000. In 1996 over 70,000 kids in Metro alone used the food bank, and sadly the number of children growing up in shelters instead of their own homes has grown dramatically.

The big difference between you and me is that I believe we have a responsibility to deal with child poverty. I'm committed to doing just that. You've been in government for 17 long months and your policies have only made it worse. Premier, when are you going to do something of substance to help Ontario's kids?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I appreciate the question. I know, as do our caucus, our party and our cabinet as well the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, that we have joined forces with the other first ministers from across the country to deal with the whole issue of children: children's hopes and dreams and aspirations within this great country of Canada.

I might add and give credit to the premiers of British Columbia and Saskatchewan, who brought it to our meetings, enthusiastically endorsed by all the premiers and now working in conjunction with the federal government in a coordinated way. Minister Pettigrew from the federal government I think received plaudits from the other provinces to deal with the situation where clearly

not all are sharing in what are the beginnings of recovery in this province and the country.

**Mr McGuinty:** I didn't get any answer in that question at all, nothing there that would lend any comfort to kids in Ontario.

Let me tell you what it means to grow up poor in Ontario. It means you're more likely to do poorly in school, it means you're more likely to have behaviour problems, it means you're more likely to get into trouble with the law, it means you're more likely to need social assistance and it means you're more likely to need health care services.

One in five kids in Ontario lives in poverty, and your policies have only made it worse: your policy to cut social assistance, a program that almost one half-million Ontario kids rely on; you've got a policy to cut junior kindergarten; you've cut funding to children's aid; and you've cut women's shelters as well. The mess you've created with the family support plan and the threat you've made against child care workers are also hurting kids. Your actions in government are hurting kids.

Premier, when will you start making a real investment in Ontario's children?

**Hon Mr Harris:** The reason I sought the leadership of this party and developed the Common Sense Revolution campaign in this province and our whole *raison d'être* is for my children and for their generation, that they can have similar opportunities to ours or better ones than we had. Unfortunately, after 10 years of your party and the NDP, my children and their generation were looking forward to a legacy of debt.

What have we done? We are reducing that deficit, taking that burden off them. In addition to balancing the books, getting our affairs in order, taking that burden, specific proposals are new funding for nutrition programs in elementary schools; enhanced child care support, \$200 million over five years, bringing funding for child care to the highest level in our province's history, significantly higher than any other province on a per capita basis; funding for immunization of school children; expansion of early intervention services, \$10 million annually for expectant mothers and families with children under six to help implement wellness strategies that target at-risk population; expansion of a leading-edge computer technology, \$40 million; \$59 million with Ontario summer jobs —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

**Mr McGuinty:** That sounds more like bureaucratic tinkering than real action on behalf of Ontario's kids. Maybe the problem is this: You know, the damndest thing about kids is they can't get their act together. They don't organize busloads to march on Queen's Park, they don't write us as MPPs, they don't telephone us. What that means is that we have a very special responsibility as members of this House to represent those concerns.

I don't feel, and anybody who knows anything about kids in this province doesn't feel, that your government is properly representing the interests of children here. Ontario kids are counting on us to make their lives better. I'm going to be a voice for them. I'm going to propose programs that will make a difference. Premier, when are you going to do that?



**Hon Mr Harris:** Before I was cut off, I listed about 12, and they're there. Let me say that I welcome an added voice, in addition to my own and our cabinet and our caucus and our colleagues, for children.

What have been the results of some of the programs so far? The results have been that children in Ontario are the best off anywhere they are in the entire country. We have more child care dollars and more child care spaces per capita than any other jurisdiction in the country.

Between December 1989 and December 1994, we had a 121% increase in the number of families with children on social assistance under the NDP. Since December 1994, our policies have led to an 11% decline in the number of families with children on social assistance in this province.

So the policies are there, they are working, children are better off. But I have to tell you, there is more that we need yet to do. It's why the first ministers have set the priorities they have; it's why we've instructed our minister; it's why we're in politics, and now we are happy to have another voice from the Liberal Party to help us.

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My second question is also for the Premier. I believe that of all the things that government can do for people to prepare them for the future, the most important is to provide them with the best possible education. Not only does education allow people to make a success of themselves, it allows our province as a whole to succeed. You and I both know that in a global economy, the best jobs and the best quality of life depend on a world-class education. At a time when we should be investing in our future through education, you've cut junior kindergarten, you've increased class sizes, you've forced more students into portables and you've increased tuition fees.

Premier, would you not agree that the quality of our future depends on the quality of the education we offer our people in this province?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I know the Minister of Education agrees and I'm sure he'd be glad to answer.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** Yes, I'm very pleased to address that question by the Leader of the Opposition. In fact, as the member probably knows and as I've said in this chamber before, we have found ourselves with an education system where our students, our young people in Ontario, are not performing as well in international standards, international tests, as their peers in other countries and other provinces. We are moving now very quickly to change our education system, to improve it, to set higher standards for our students, to have a more rigorous curriculum for our students, to test better for our students.

We are also looking at the legacy of the last decade, where we have in those 10 years put 8,000 additional portables in our school system across the province. I find that deplorable. I find the state of our education system when we took office to be deplorable. We are making those improvements. We are making them for the benefit of the students of this province.

1410

**Mr McGuinty:** Nobody here is indicating that education is perfect in Ontario, but I think the very last thing that you would do is take money out of it. We need every cent in there spent in the most effective way possible. The last thing you'd do is take money out of it.

One of the big differences between we Liberals over here and you Tories over there is that we see education as an investment in our future; you see it purely as an expense. You talk about making education a priority, but our students, teachers and parents all know that the only time education is a priority for this Conservative government is when you're looking for more money to cut.

Post-secondary education is a good example. Thanks to your cuts, Ontario now ranks 10th out of 10 in per-student funding. We are last, and that doesn't bode well for our future. When it comes to other things this government does, you like to cite your spending in relation to the national average. Minister, why is it, when it comes to post-secondary education, we have to settle for last place?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I thank the honourable member for the question, because I think if I can point out to him the difference between this party and his party, it's very simple. When we look to the future of children in this province, we look at their whole future.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Members of the official opposition, it's difficult when you're all heckling.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** Yes, I want to hear John again.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Apparently you're not that hoarse; I can hear a few comments.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank you because I believe this is an important distinction. It's not just partisan politics, it's an important distinction, because we look at the whole future for the young people of this province, and that means having the opportunity for a decent job and a career and to raise a family in this province. That means not saddling them with the kind of high debt your government has or the high spending your government has. It means leaving them with some investment in this province and a chance for a real job, and that's a task we're taking on, preparing the future for those young people. I take that task very seriously.

**Mr McGuinty:** Talking about borrowing money, it's going to cost taxpayers in this province a total of \$12 billion to fund this tax cut. You could do one heck of a lot in education with \$12 billion.

I believe our children need an education that will enable them not only to survive but to thrive in the 21st century, to secure the best jobs and meet the demands of responsible citizenship. For me, that starts with junior kindergarten. One of the first decisions you made was to cut funding to early childhood education, to take away the tools which allowed our kids to get a jump-start on learning. Minister, will you today admit that your decision to cut junior kindergarten was wrong and shortsighted? Will you restore funding to junior kindergarten?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** No. Having spent the last year and a half or so looking at not only the education system in Ontario but education systems around the world, I can tell you this: What has happened to the education system in Ontario is a lack of standards, and we are restoring standards to the education system.

What has happened is that we have spent money outside of the classroom that should be directed at the classroom to make a difference in young people's lives. We are correcting that, because we believe a more affordable system, a more accountable system and a higher quality system is an absolute imperative for this government. We are moving forward quickly on that front.

#### FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Finance. Last week, the Minister of Finance let the people of Ontario down. He told them about the government's phoney tax scheme, but he refused to tell people across Ontario where the \$3 billion in cuts will come from to pay for his tax scheme. People across this province know that the \$3 billion in further cuts will hurt health care, education, colleges, universities and municipalities, and they also know it will cost thousands of further jobs lost. Can the Minister of Finance tell us now where the \$3 billion in cuts will come from, and can he guarantee that he will not be offloading responsibility for important services like health care and social services on to the municipal tax base? Can he guarantee that?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** The leader of the third party knows full well — he was in committee for the better part of an hour, until he decided to go to a scrum —

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Oh, Jeez.

**Hon Mr Eves:** It's true. Gilles was there. Excuse me.

As I explained to the honourable member on Thursday, when the government is in a position to announce its restructuring exercise, it will do so, but it's not going to do so in a thoughtless and careless manner. Municipalities and hospitals were told on November 29, 1995, what funding levels for the fiscal year 1997-98 would be. That is a full 15 months or more before those fiscal years started. I appreciate that you may not be able to understand that, because your government never did that. As a matter of fact, in 1994 your Treasurer informed municipalities —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Minister of Finance, come to order, please. Supplementary.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Minister, allow me to continue the same line of questioning on your fiscal plan. Last week when you released your so-called economic statement, you exuded confidence, and yet at the marketplace, once you step out of here, out of the media room, you don't find the same confidence among shoppers, among Ontarians.

I would like to turn your attention to last week's Report on Business. It says, "Where have all the shoppers gone?" Keep in mind that demographics are two thirds of

everything. This is what Mike McCracken of Informetrica says: "I would love to be an optimist. But we won't get the real growth in disposable income to sustain any kind of consumer strength in the coming years."

You have to snap out of it. You're about to release tax cuts on the people of Ontario, and yet job cuts and \$3 billion in expenditure cuts —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, member.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Consumer confidence is up 19.2% in the province of Ontario in this calendar year. Those are the Conference Board of Canada's figures. New housing starts are up in excess of 21%. House sales are up 24%. There are 127,000 net new jobs created since July 1, 1995. I know you find that difficult to believe, representing a party whose legacy to employment was a loss of 10,000 jobs in the five years you were there, but 127,000 net new jobs have been created in Ontario in the last 16 months.

**Mr Pouliot:** Save me your political spin. Numero uno, bankruptcies are at an all-time high. Credit cards, plastic: all-time high. Job rate among young people: 15.5% unemployment. This is what the bond rating agencies, the people who grade those people — and the only reason Ontario was not downgraded is because of his zeal to cut yet more jobs and more into the economy. This is what they're telling you: If you're off a single one percentage point in your projection, you will have to raise another \$2.8 billion. That's \$3 billion that you have yet to announce —

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** You're off several points.

**Mr Pouliot:** — plus \$2.8 billion on top of the \$7 billion that's already been announced. This government, this minister will have us in the poorhouse in no time. When are you going to come clean?

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Listen to who's talking. Wow.

**Mr Pouliot:** When are you going to come clean and tell us about the real projection for the province of Ontario? Tell us, Minister.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I ask the government members to come to order, please. It's very difficult to hear the question. Have you finished putting the question? Yes, you have. Minister.

**Hon Mr Eves:** He is referring, of course, with respect to the projections of DBRS, and they're quite accurate as far as they go, but they say, "If the province of Ontario's forecast was out by 1% a year for four consecutive years, there would be a necessity to find another \$2.8 billion." He's quite correct, but he also knows that in this fiscal year that we're currently in, our projections were 1.9 real GDP growth. We're now saying it's going to be 2.3, and most private forecasters are well ahead of that. What he's not saying is the other side of the coin. If we underestimate how the economy performs by 1% a year for four consecutive years we will have a \$2.8-billion surplus, or we will balance the books of the province one year ahead of time. Heaven forbid that should happen in Ontario.



1420

## HEALTH CARE REFORM

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My next question is for the Minister of Health. We've heard from sources inside your government that you are contemplating moving the responsibility for community health services to municipalities. I asked you this question last week and you did not deny it.

You know that community health centres represent \$103 million worth of health care expenditure. They provide care in many communities across this province. They provide integrated care to the populations they serve, allowing people to see the appropriate health care professional at the appropriate time, saving money and providing complete health care services to the populations they serve.

Minister, last week you would not deny this \$103-million shift of community health centres to municipalities. Are you still contemplating pushing the important health care work of community health services on to the property tax base in municipalities?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** My answer to the honourable member is the same as when he asked the question last week: that in the Who Does What discussions which are taking place across all ministries the government, along with municipal partners and others who are helping out, is trying to figure out exactly how we can get rid of duplication, waste and overlap in the system and drive every dollar towards, in this case, direct patient care.

I say to the honourable member that community health centres will continue to be an important part of the primary care health care system in Ontario, and that would be regardless of where all their funding would come from. At the end of the day, I can assure you, they are an important part of the health care system today and will continue to be that way.

**Mr Hampton:** There's an issue here. These community health centres, which provide some of the most efficient care in the province and cost the province \$103 million, are very worried about any plan to transfer them to the municipal tax base, because you know, as you go around cutting hospital services, that puts more and more pressure on community services. Those community services have to pick up more and more of the patient load. If you're going to put community health centres on to the property tax base, you know what's going to happen.

There isn't enough strength in the municipal property tax base to fund the pressure you're pushing off on community health centres. This will be a very dangerous offloading indeed. The association of community health centres wants to know: Will you guarantee that they will be maintained as an important provincial health care service and that they will not be pushed off to the limited municipal tax base?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** This government doesn't need any lectures about the importance of community-based care. This government just a few months ago made the largest single investment in modern history in health care in Ontario: \$170 million into community-based care, creating some 4,400 new jobs for nurses and front-line

providers; and expanding those services, creating access to those services to between 80,000 and 100,000 more seniors and disabled and children who need the community-based services.

I repeat my answer to the previous question and my answer of last week: Community health centres will continue to be an important part of health care in Ontario. They will continue to be part of a comprehensive health care delivery system. Because the direction we're going in is the same direction as nurses and doctors and other providers, a fully integrated health care system, at the end of the day community health centres will be part of that new and fully integrated health care system, which is the vision of the government and the vision of health care for this province.

**Mr Hampton:** This is what community health centres find so frustrating. You told them and the public that in a move towards integrated health care, you would have some pilots up and running involving community health centres in providing that overall integrated health care.

I'll tell you what they're really worried about: that this is how you're going to cut health care, that you're going to push the dirty work off on to municipalities, and they'll have to either increase their municipal taxes significantly or watch those important health care services start to wither. That's why they want the guarantee. If you're about true health care change and not about health care cuts, you can't put this on the municipal tax base. Give them that guarantee.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I think the honourable member is splitting hairs here. At the end of the day, I think we can agree there's one taxpayer. Frankly, what they want to see is the best use of their dollar, and they want to see that dollar not go towards administration and more government, which was what you were all about. In the five years you were in office and in the five years the Liberals were in office, this place and its bureaucracy grew beyond anyone's wildest imagination, totally out of control.

We will not retreat from our determination to delayer the system, to get rid of the red tape, to get rid of the waste, to get rid of the duplication and give those single taxpayers the best value for their dollar, and that includes the health care dollar, that we can humanly muster on this side of the House. That's our commitment to the people of Ontario. As I've said, we are moving towards a fully integrated health care delivery system, and the government today reiterates its commitment to at least spending \$17.4 billion in health care in this province.

I really can't answer the honourable member's question better than that.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'd ask the leader of the official opposition and member for Algoma to come to order please.

## ECONOMIC STATEMENT

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is for the Minister of Finance and it has to do with last week's financial statement. I remember that a year ago, in your fiscal and economic statement, which



was exactly a year ago, you gave quite a lecture to what you called the transfer partners about the need for them to plan better, to get at their core businesses, to function more efficiently and all those sorts of things. It was an interesting lecture.

But part of it was that you said: "For the transfer partners to plan effectively, they must know, as early as possible, the funding. That is why the government is announcing the plans for the transfers." So last year you said: "Plan effectively. We will tell you your transfers." Now we've found out that contrary to what you had told us, you don't know what the transfers are going to be for colleges, universities, school boards. Last year you said that to plan effectively you would give them the transfers. Are you now saying that because you cannot give them the transfers they will now not be able to plan effectively?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** No, I am not saying that at all. The honourable member for Scarborough-Agincourt knows full well. He heard the question the leader of the third party asked today and in committee, as indeed he did himself last Thursday. Municipalities and hospitals knew 15 months ago roughly what the transfers would be.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** But there are more cuts coming.

**Hon Mr Eves:** That is simply not true, I say to the honourable member. For hospitals and municipalities, the transfer levels were announced on November 29, 1995. With respect to boards of education, colleges and universities, as I told the honourable member and other honourable members on Thursday afternoon in finance committee, as soon as the Minister of Education is able to make recommendations following the submission of the Crombie report, which will be done early this month, and after we have the report in about colleges and universities, which is scheduled to be in on December 15 or shortly thereafter, the minister of colleges and universities and education will be able to provide those details as well.

1430

**Mr Phillips:** The fact is, you can't get your act together. It's getting embarrassing. You promised these transfers. There are colleges, school boards, universities.

I will say to the minister also that I see on your economic numbers that now, six months after the budget, your projections for retail sales are lower for 1996 and 1997 than in your budget. Your projection for housing starts for 1997 is lower now, six months later, than it was in the budget. Your projection for growth in personal income is lower than it was in your budget six months ago. Your projection for corporate profit is lower than it was six months ago. The four key economic indicators — personal income growth, growth in retail sales, housing and corporate profits — are all lower than six months ago. Can the Minister of Finance explain why you have had to downgrade all four of those in the last six months in this economic report?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The honourable member knows full well, if he reads the entire statement and all the background information, that we will exceed our target of an \$8.2-billion deficit this year, just as we exceeded it by \$582 million last year. He will also know that housing

starts are up 21%, consumer confidence is up 19.2%. I'd be more than happy to have this discussion with the honourable member at the conclusion of this fiscal year, and I'd be happy to compare the results of any forecast. Our numbers have always been cautious, prudent numbers. Unlike previous administrations, we do not predict that the economy will grow by some exorbitant rate to make our figures look good. They are very —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister of Finance, just come to order for a minute. Members of the opposition, Minister of Finance.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Minister of Finance, when I'm standing in my place, there's got to be no one else standing. I would caution you to come to order. I will say to the opposition, it's difficult to hear the answer. Particularly today, there are some cantankerous responses coming from this side. Please, please, keep it down. I want to hear the members.

## CHILD CARE CENTRES

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services and it's with respect to child care and her report on the child care system in the province of Ontario. In your proposed directions, you set out that physical plant requirements that you say are unnecessary and too costly should be limited, and you use this example. You say, "These include compulsory provision of windows larger than current building code specifications."

The Day Nurseries Act regulations state that every operator of a day nursery shall ensure that the window glass area in each play activity room of each day nursery that is operated by an operator and has a program that runs for six hours or more contains an area that is at least equivalent to 10% of the floor area of the play activity room.

What is it about 10% natural daylight for toddlers and preschoolers that has you so bothered that you want to eliminate that regulation?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Thank you to the honourable member for the question. We raised the issue in the child care report that there were some building code specifications, some items in the requirements put on day care centres that we were told perhaps added additional costs and may not contribute to quality. We felt it was worthwhile exploring that suggestion, since people from the child care field seemed to think that it might be of assistance, so we are exploring that recommendation. As the honourable member knows, we are continuing to consult and I look forward to getting the information that I'm sure she will have for me as well before we make final decisions about how to improve the child care system.

**Ms Lankin:** The only people who have said that windows for kids are an unnecessary regulation are the commercial for-profit operators, and that's who the minister seems to be listening to. Let me give you another example of what you cite as an unnecessary and costly provision: "overly restrictive requirements for fencing playground areas." That's from your report.



The Day Nurseries Act regulation: "Every operator of a day nursery shall ensure that each playground and each day nursery operated by an operator used by children under six years of age is fenced to a minimum height of 1.2 metres and the fence is furnished with one or more gates that are securely closed at all times."

As I travelled the province in urban centres, I heard about the need for fences to stop kids from bolting out into busy streets, from keeping ill-intentioned strangers out of the play yards, to prevent child abduction in custody and abuse cases. In northern rural Ontario, I was in a community at a centre where they regularly have cougar alerts and bear alerts.

Fences seem pretty necessary. What is it about fences for our preschoolers and toddlers that has you so bothered that you want to eliminate that regulation?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member knows we are not talking about eliminating necessary fences around child care centres. Of course we need fences around child care centres, and she well knows that.

What we are talking about is looking at options that may actually help us improve this child care system. We've got parents out there who say they want child care and they can't afford it. I think this government should pay attention to what those parents are saying so that we can give them the supports they need, instead of being so hung up on everything having to be the status quo. Whenever we talk about trying to change, they stand up and say, "My goodness, we can't change anything," at the same time as those same people are saying that more parents need more choices and more quality care. That's what this government is interested in. And as for consultation, our government let in groups to consult with on child care that their government, when they were there, refused to speak to.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy. In my riding of Durham East, there are many knowledgeable professional and volunteer organizations, like SAGA, STORM and private sector firms, that want a role in sound environmental decision-making. I would like to ask you today what roles you see for private sector and public sector involvement in environmental protection in Ontario's future.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** My ministry is looking for new ways to forge ahead in environmental protection not only by regulating as we have in the past, not only by the command and control approach of the past, but by looking for new partnerships with private industry, with private industry groups and with non-profit groups as well.

We, the Ministry of Environment, are not the only body that's responsible for the environment. Everybody in Ontario is responsible for the environment. In essence, what our government is doing is that we're going to look for new ways because the old ways haven't worked; we're looking for new partnerships to deal with old problems.

**Mr O'Toole:** When you were speaking of various non-profit and private sector initiatives, what types of ideas and approaches are you seeing and which industry groups are bringing these suggestions forward?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Many industries are developing environmental codes of practice which help the individual businesses manage their environmental waste and emissions. Other groups are joining together to attack waste problems. For instance, the household battery association, representing manufacturers of batteries, has submitted a proposal for an industry-led recycling project. Another group is the photo-finishing industry, which has forged ahead in recycling a lot of the silver waste from their processing chemicals. Recently, I challenged the Recycling Council of Ontario for other major industry groups to come forward with other ideas. Other provinces have been able to forge new alliances, have tried new ideas which have worked in the past, and we're willing to accept any new idea which will improve our environment.

#### DEVELOPMENT CHARGES

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. You may recall that last week when you were asked a question by my colleague related to the Development Charges Act changes you indicated that if Mississauga was prepared to put a freeze on development, the people in Brampton and Vaughan and York and Durham would be quite happy to hear about that. Well, we've since learned that in effect those municipalities are intending to freeze development as well. Basically, they're saying that if there are any changes in the act, their taxes may go up by as much as 25%.

What we would like to know is why you would go against the recommendation of your own Who Does What committee when it suggested in writing to you that "the development charges are a critical and essential municipal revenue source to finance growth-related capital infrastructure and any amendments to the act to reduce the scope or permitted level of development charges will mean higher municipal taxes or user fees."

Minister, why are you in favour of higher local real estate taxes?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** To the member opposite, what we are in favour of is affordable housing. We don't like to see the municipalities put high charges on new home buyers, young families who are trying to buy their first home who have to pay \$20,000 on a \$160,000 house as a head tax. We brought in a bill to bring some fairness and equity to the Development Charges Act. It gives the municipalities the opportunity to have growth pay for growth, but in a reasonable and fair method.

1440

**Mr Gerretsen:** You know as well as I do that no non-profit or housing that is relatively cheap to accommodate people is going to be subjected to a \$40,000 kind of charge under the existing act. No municipality is going to allow that to happen.

Why are you not simply allowing municipalities to do what they're elected to do? You've always talked about



an equal partnership with municipalities. Let the municipalities decide what kind of services they want to have subject to the development charges. Why don't you allow them to simply make up their own mind whether or not they want any development charges in their municipality, and how much they're going to be and for what kind of services they are going to be?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I think development charges are discretionary and a municipality can either charge them or doesn't have to charge them. Many municipalities are not charging the amount they are allowed to do now.

We want to bring in a system that is fair. I know that all the development within the community is paid for by that, that the works that are done outside serve all members of the community — like recreation centres, like the widening of an arterial road. I don't think it is unfair at all to see the general tax base pay for 10% of a road that everybody in the community is going to use.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** Why don't you limit the amount developers can charge for houses.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Essex South, will you come to order, please. New question.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Attorney General. Over the weekend we read reports about your family support plan blitz up at Downsview, trying to empty those boxes out and get them filed away and processed before Christmas.

Last week in this House I raised the case with you of Susan Wilkins. It took over a week to find her file in those boxes up at Downsview, and when they did find it they found the court order that had been registered with the family support plan on August 2 sitting there in that file. It had not been acted on for five months.

That file sat, like thousands of others, in those boxes because you laid off 290 staff and closed the regional offices without having a replacement system up and running. For months you've been defending yourself and saying that everything is fine and is on track. If that is true, then how do you explain to Susan Wilkins and her three children that they have not received one cent from family support?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** There have been people who haven't been receiving money from the family support plan from the days their orders have been registered with the plan because there has been an inability for many years to make collection on a lot of those orders. We, through Bill 82, are developing a better plan to in fact make enforcement more effective and to be able to collect some of the money that accrues on the basis of arrears of \$100 million a year. I can tell you that in the month of November almost \$34 million was disbursed to 110,104 recipients.

**Ms Lankin:** You can't collect money if you don't file the garnish order with employers. It sat in that file for five months. You took no action. It's got nothing to do with an ex-spouse's refusing to pay, nothing to do with an employer who's refusing to cooperate. It sat in your

files, in boxes, at Downsview for five months with no action. Take some responsibility.

Susan Wilkins has a support order for \$1,300 a month. She is owed \$7,800 now. She's not going to get a cent, according to family support plan, who's just filed the garnish order with the employer last week, until February. By then she'll be out over \$10,000. Minister, it's four weeks before Christmas. Susan and her three children do not have that \$7,800. It is your fault. Would you give us a commitment today that your government will advance Susan and her three kids the \$7,800 before Christmas so that they can have a merry Christmas, like your family will?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The member knows that of people who receive money from the family support plan, only 23% of orders, at a maximum, have ever been in full compliance. The number of people who get nothing from the family support plan, even though they have an order that's been registered with the plan, is over 50%.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** You don't even file them, so why bother?

**Ms Lankin:** You didn't file this one. It is your fault.  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. The members for London Centre, Algoma and Beaches-Woodbine, please come to order and allow the minister —

**Ms Lankin:** You didn't file it.

**The Speaker:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine, allow the minister to respond.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** With the new bill that has received second reading, we will now be able to start to do a much better job than we've ever been able to do before dealing with the issues of enforcement. As soon as that bill receives third reading, we can implement driver's licence suspensions; we can implement better collection procedures, referring issues and notifying credit bureaus; getting at people who shelter. Once that becomes law, those tools will then be available to the family support plan.

#### ONTARIO FILM INDUSTRY

**Mr John L. Parker (York East):** My question is for my colleague the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. As you are aware, my riding of York East is home to a great number of filmmakers. In fact, I suspect that we have more filmmakers per capita in my riding than we have in any jurisdiction in North America outside Hollywood.

Last week, following the presentation of the Genie awards, for reasons that I can't explain, my good friend the member for Port Arthur stood in this place and criticized our government for its policies regarding the film industry in Ontario. Minister, I wonder if you can set the record straight and explain for this House what your ministry is doing to support the film industry in Ontario.

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** To the member for York East, first of all I'd like to start off by congratulating all of the award winners of last week's Genie awards and particularly to recognize the solid representation of Ontario's



film industry. I think this is a strong statement of the quality and the vitality of the province's film industry.

I'd just like to point out that the government continues to support the industry through the Ontario film and television tax credit, and it's anticipated that this credit will inject about \$15 million into the Ontario film and television production community in its first year.

**Mr Parker:** Minister, I wonder, by way of supplementary, if I could ask you to explain to my good friends opposite what the response of the film industry has been to your initiatives.

**Hon Ms Mushinski:** To quote the *Globe and Mail* of November 7, reporting on the latest figures, it stated that Ontario was also the most profitable place to be in the film and television business. Producers in the province raked in operating profits of \$58.3 million, or 91% of the industry total.

I might add that this quote comes from Mr Gerry Phillips, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt: "The programs on film development, clearly that is a growth industry, one that we all want to encourage. It is a unique industry that I think is a terrific industry for Ontario and will support clearly the things that help develop that."

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I say to the members, particularly the member for Cochrane South, ministers are allowed to read answers if they choose to, excerpts from issues. The only thing I would caution is, if you ask ministers not to read answers, then you have to be prepared not to read your questions. So that's the point.

1450

#### LONG-TERM-CARE REFORM

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** My question is to the minister for seniors issues, the member for Burlington South. Minister, you and your government continually attack the most vulnerable in our society, our seniors, especially those who, because of their age and health conditions, seek the ultimate health care in a nursing home.

After being hit with prescription fees, Wheel-Trans cuts and cuts that affect seniors' services in many other ways, you and your ministry have now imposed a punitive \$40-a-day charge while waiting for a nursing home bed. This is an intolerable action towards our seniors. They are now required to pay immediately the \$40-a-day charge, the same charge as if they were receiving the care and attention of a nursing home.

My question to the minister is this: With a waiting list of some 4,500 people — I said this is my question to the minister; I hope the minister is listening — and a freeze on nursing home beds, please tell us what you are going to do —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, member for Yorkview.

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** I'd like to thank the member opposite for his question. I know all members of this House are concerned about the long-term-care needs of Ontario seniors.

The member opposite would be aware that this government has embarked on an ambitious investment plan to ensure that seniors have access to appropriate care. We inherited a system, quite frankly, a patchwork system of overbedded and underbedded areas all across this province. I want to advise the member opposite that his assertion that there are 4,500 people on waiting lists is a little high compared to the data that we're using and that is generally accepted within the industry across Ontario by health care professionals.

The truth is that we have people who are currently in chronic care beds in hospitals who can move comfortably to nursing home beds which are available. The principle that is being established here is that seniors should receive the most appropriate care where it can be sensitively presented at the least amount of cost. The very expensive chronic care beds are not the most efficient use of Ontario's precious health care resources.

**Mr Sergio:** Is this the best message you can deliver to our seniors? Is this the best you can do for our seniors? Did you consult our seniors? Are you willing to have our seniors languishing in a hospital corridor, neglected, abandoned, uncared for, with no other option or alternative? You are treating our seniors and those in need of a nursing home with disrespect and shame.

I'm asking you again. You have created an intolerable crisis. Will you commit to discontinue your policies which are causing seniors so much anxiety and which are affecting the quality of health care they deserve and they need? Will you please commit yourself to that?

**Hon Mr Jackson:** I want to remind the member opposite that this government is committed to making sure that seniors receive the most appropriate care where it meets their best needs. The fact is that your government, for five years, worked on long-term care, reduced its transfer payments to chronic care hospitals, and the litany goes on. Our colleagues in the third party worked on long-term care. At least they got it to a legislative change and to a bill in this province. But seniors waited 10 years for these reforms so that they could have not only adequate services but appropriate services.

This government has moved decisively to ensure that those beds are available in those parts of the province where they are badly needed and were badly neglected over the last, quite frankly, more than a decade, and we'll be the first to admit that. But I want to reassure the member opposite that the taxpayers have requested that health dollars be spent wisely, judiciously and sensitively, and we will believe these programs, especially the review of chronic care bed utilization, are appropriate for the province of Ontario.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It's becoming clearer and clearer as you proceed with your amalgamation of municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto that you seem to be guided far more by political expediency than by the practical realities of what is going on and what best planning is able to be put in place. One of the things that shows this distinction is that you seem to



be very determined to proceed to amalgamate within Metropolitan Toronto the six area municipalities into one, yet you don't seem to want to apply the same logic to the surrounding areas — Peel region, Durham region, York region, for example. I'd just like to ask you minister, why is it that your logic around restructuring municipalities within the GTA is confined only to Metropolitan Toronto?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I don't think anything could be further from the truth. We intend to deal with all the regions throughout the province of Ontario. Many of them have asked us to provide some assistance. The region of Hamilton-Wentworth, for example, has asked us to provide a facilitator. We've done that. They're in favour of a single tier; they're in favour of putting six municipalities into one municipality. We're going to assist them in doing that. There are other issues that face the regions in the GTA, and we will be dealing with them as well when we deal with the city of Toronto.

**Mr Silipo:** I don't know if the minister was simply evading my question, because in his answer he didn't mention at all the regions I referred to, which are the other parts of the GTA in terms of Peel region, Durham region and York region, for example, or if he's just now told us that there will be changes to those municipalities, which is what I was trying to find out.

The other point I want the minister to address is why in this whole issue he is forgetting about the fact that the economic entity around Toronto is the greater Toronto area, however we may want to define that. The point is that the issue is bigger than just Metropolitan Toronto. You can look at ways of restructuring local municipalities, but you still will need to deal with the reality of the economic region, which is the greater Toronto area, and we would suggest even to look at the governance question as it applies to that entity.

What I want to ask you is, why are you not bringing forward any proposals to deal with the governance of the greater Toronto area?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I guess the honourable member didn't hear my response. I said we would be bringing forward recommendations on all of the regions within the GTA in the not-too-distant future. I'm meeting with the regional chairs very soon to go over the requests they've made to restructure and reshape their municipalities. I intend to bring all that material together roughly at the same point in time. We will be dealing with the Metropolitan Toronto issue and we will be dealing with the GTA regional issue, as well as with other regions throughout the province.

#### TIME-SHARE FRAUD

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Recently, I met with a constituent, and during my meeting with her we discussed the issue of time-share fraud and the fact that many people purchase time shares outside the province of Ontario. Some, my constituent tells me, do not fully understand what they may be getting into. My constituent spoke about high-pressure

sales tactics with no cooling-off period, questionable promotions, lack of disclosure and poor management. What is the government doing to protect consumers like my constituent from this type of scam?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** Project TimeShare, which is a joint task force composed of the OPP, Peel Region police, our ministry and York Region police, was established in 1995 to deal with the complaints against the time-share industry. Our ministry does refer the complaints to Project TimeShare, and in fact consumers can directly contact Project TimeShare through an established hotline, at area code 905-612-7042, if they have a complaint.

Project TimeShare has had extensive investigations which have led to the arrest of a former York region resident in connection with the fraudulent sales of time-shares in vacation resorts. The press release that was issued about a month ago indicated that of course the resorts have lost money as a result of time-share fraud and the consumers who have purchased the time-shares have lost money and have lost any time they might have had.

**Mr Newman:** What else is the government doing to ensure that consumers are aware of these time-share schemes? Can the government work with responsible businesses within the industry to help eliminate the problem people?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** The typical problems that have been with us in the time-share industry have been some of the very high-pressure sales tactics, with no cooling-off or cancellation periods; questionable promotions and advertising; a real lack of disclosure and alleged misrepresentations; high-risk developments; and poor management. Certainly this is a huge risk for consumers right now.

Our ministry also produces a consumer package called Consumer Beat, which informs the consumer on a regular basis about many of the consumer fraud initiatives, also specifically on time-shares. We are prepared right now to work with the legitimate time-share industry, to prepare certain standards that will assist in avoiding these types of problems in the future. These are a few of the initiatives, but once again I do encourage any consumer who has a problem to contact Project TimeShare.

1500

#### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I have a question for the Minister of Health. You realize that the merger between the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry and the Queen Street Mental Health Centre is proceeding because you want to save money. The state of mental health care in Ontario is near collapse. Hundreds of patients are roaming our streets. You have provided no support or after-care once you've pushed them out of these institutions. Metro police alone are reporting over 300 escapes from both these institutions over a period of 11 months. How will your mental health care system improve when you continue to reduce the dollar amounts and propose to cut 102 psychiatric beds?



**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** I'm not directly involved in the talks the honourable member brings forward with respect to the Clarke and Queen Street Mental Health Centre. Those are voluntary talks right now. In fact, I don't even know if they're still ongoing; the last I heard, they weren't talking any more.

All of our health care administrators and institutions in the province are having discussions with other institutions similar to themselves to see if they can find efficiencies. Why do we have two administrations down there within spitting distance of each other? It doesn't make any sense. I prefer they do it on a voluntary basis, but they have to have these discussions, they have to get their administration down and they've got to drive those administrative dollars and that waste and duplication — all that money has to go into patient services.

I will remind the honourable member that this government has invested \$20 million in the community investment fund. We've done that without seeing any money saved in the administration that we're asking them to save. We've done that out of money we found through getting rid of waste in the —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister, thank you very much.

## PETITIONS

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has recommended the closure of two" acute care "hospitals in Sudbury; and

"Whereas the overall number of available beds will be reduced by approximately 35%; and

"Whereas the reduction in beds will affect Sudbury's ability to remain the referral centre for health care in northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas there will be a large number of layoffs in the health profession, impacting the quality of local health care and our Sudbury economy; and

"Whereas the global annual budget for Sudbury health care will be reduced by 25%;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to rescind the Health Services Restructuring Commission's recommendations to close two" acute care "Sudbury hospitals."

This brings the total number to 18,504 who have signed this petition, and I again affix my name to it.

### OMNIBUS LEGISLATION

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I've got a petition I received in the mail this morning. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It says:

"I oppose Bill 26. I protest this Tory proposal to deregulate the price of prescribed medicine, to dismantle the services that make up the common fabric of our communities; to introduce a two-tier health system, one for the rich and one for the rest of the citizens of our province.

"This Bill 26 is draconian. The way it's being handled by the Tory government is anti-democratic. The government should withdraw or repeal this bill and commence broad community-based consultations on the future of public services in Ontario."

It's signed by Donna Speck from Thorold Road and Pam Hardman from Iron Street and a whole bunch of other people from down Welland-Thorold area.

## ABORTION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** It's a pleasure to rise today to present a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury or illness;

"Whereas abortion is not therapeutic;

"Whereas abortion is never medically necessary;

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require elective procedures to be funded;

"Whereas there is no right to publicly funded abortion;

"Whereas it is the responsibility and the authority of the province exclusively to determine what services will be insured;

"Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is, indeed, hazardous to women's health;

"Whereas the availability of abortion at public expense leads to the use of modern abortion as a means of birth control;

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario that the government remove abortion as a service or procedure covered under the provincial health insurance plan."

I affix my name to this petition.

## EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I have a petition regarding secondary school reform in Ontario that reads as follows:

"We believe that the heart of education in our province is the relationship between students and teachers and that the human and rational dimension should be maintained and extended as proposed reform. The Minister of Education knows how strongly we oppose the secondary reform recommendations being proposed by the ministry and government.

"We recognize that support is needed to review secondary education in Ontario. The proposal for reform as put forward by the educational ministry, however, is substantially flawed in several key areas: reduced instruction time, reduction in instruction in English, reduction of quality teaching personnel, academic work, experience not linked to education curriculum, devaluation of formal education.

"We strongly urge the Minister of Education to delay the implementation of secondary school reform so interested stakeholders — parents, students, school councils, trustees and teachers — are able to participate in a more meaningful consultation process which will help ensure that a high quality of publicly funded education is provided."

That's signed by 44 residents of Cornwall, and I also signed the petition.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** This is a petition to the Legislature of Ontario from literally hundreds of people from Sault Ste Marie and area.

"Whereas child care is an essential service and children should not be used to make money;

"Whereas reducing current standards to minimal building codes compromises the safety of children;

"Whereas providing funding to the private sector will lead to reduced accountability for tax dollars;

"Whereas children's growth and development could be in serious jeopardy without trained professionals caring for them;

"Whereas reducing monitoring inspections and increasing staff-child ratios will result in poor-quality child care programs; and

"Whereas staff wages are a major indicator of quality, proposed reductions in wage subsidies will have a negative impact on child care; and

"Whereas the need for parental choice in child care is recognized;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to reconsider the directions proposed in Improving Ontario's Child Care System, the report released by Janet Ecker, as we feel it will have a negative impact on the families of Ontario."

I sign my name to this petition.

#### BLOOR VILLAGE VIDEO

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** I rise to present a petition signed by hundreds of my constituents which reads:

"We, the undersigned and residents of the riding of High Park-Swansea, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take every action possible to prevent the eviction of Bloor Village Video, currently occupying premises located at 2327 Bloor Street West in the Bloor West village of Toronto.

"We support and endorse the view of the province that small business is the economic backbone of Ontario. We hold the opinion that the increasing concentration of financial institutions at the expense of retailers threatens the future viability of this business area.

"We call upon the Parliament of Ontario to intervene on behalf of Bloor Village Video by asking the mayor of Toronto and city planners to urgently address this intensification of financial institutions that threatens the economic vitality of this retail community."

I affix my name thereto.

1510

#### USER FEES

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I keep receiving hundreds of petitions against the senior user fee and I have a petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has started to charge a senior \$2 user fee for each prescription filled since July 15, 1996; and

"Whereas seniors on fixed income do not significantly benefit from the income tax savings created by this user fee co-payment or from any other non-health user fee; and

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the \$2 copayment fee will not compensate for the suffering and misery caused by this user fee or the painstaking task involved to fill out the application forms; and

"Whereas the current Minister of Health, Jim Wilson, promised as an opposition MPP in a July 5, 1993, letter to Ontario pharmacists that his party would not endorse legislation that will punish patients to the detriment of health care in Ontario; and

"Therefore, we, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge the government of the PC administration to repeal this user fee plan because the tax-saving user fee concept is not fair, is not sensitive, is not accessible to low-income or fixed-income seniors; and lest we forget, our province's seniors have paid their dues by collectively contributing to the social, economic, moral and political fabric of Canada."

I agree with this petition and I'm affixing my signature to it.

#### ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** "Whereas we, the undersigned, believe that helping reduce crime and abuse in our communities is our responsibility as employees of the Ministry of Correctional Services, as professionals in related fields and as concerned citizens;

"That closing institutions which provide specialized services to women and treatment to men does not achieve that goal;

"That physical, emotional and sexual abuse is often transmitted from one generation to the next, with tremendous cost to society;

"That treatment aimed at breaking that cycle must include the abuser so that another generation of children is not raised with the same destructive lessons;

"That the Ontario Correctional Institute is a therapeutic community known around the world for their techniques;

"That research statistics support anecdotal evidence that we are effective in changing abusive behaviour;

"That a therapeutic community cannot exist in a superprison;

"Therefore, we urge you to save victims and money by keeping open what works."

This is signed by hundreds of people all over Ontario.

#### COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** I have a petition today on behalf of the member for Simcoe East. This petition requesting the government to institute a court challenges program of Ontario is signed by one constituent from the riding of Simcoe East and I file it today.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.



"Whereas the quality of care for residents of nursing homes and homes for the aged is being directly and adversely affected by the funding policies of the Mike Harris Conservative government;

"Whereas the funding deficiencies are forcing these institutions to reduce available staff assistance to residents to unacceptable levels;

"Whereas the user taxes placed on prescription drugs unfairly discriminate against residents of nursing homes;

"Whereas the residents of these institutions are the very people who built this great province and country;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To provide adequate funding for long-term-care institutions and eliminate the user taxes on prescription drugs for seniors."

This is signed by numerous people from the district of Manitoulin.

### TEACHERS' PREPARATION TIME

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition signed by almost 3,000 secondary school teachers in which they express opposition to any loss or reduction in preparation time for teachers since they believe it will have a negative impact on the quality of education that those teachers provide to their students.

I support the petition and I affix my name thereto.

### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas we believe that the provincial interest in public libraries in Ontario is fundamental to the rights of all Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to maintain the provincial interest in public libraries by ensuring the continuance of the following:

"(1) grants to ensure that all Ontarians have equalized access to library materials and services;

"(2) coordination of resource-sharing programs such as interlibrary loan and Internet access;

"(3) policy to ensure the future of the network of Ontario public libraries;

"(4) provincial assistance directly to libraries at the service level, for example, through Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Service-North;

"(5) legislation that maintains the autonomy of public library boards."

### BEER STORE OPENINGS

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I have a petition signed by about 50 constituents, very concerned about increased access to beer stores over the holiday season. The petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, protest in the strongest terms the recent decision made by the government of Ontario to allow beer stores to remain open the three Sundays prior to Christmas;

"The present practice of these stores being open six days a week for 12 hours per day allows sufficient time to purchase this product. Traditionally, Sunday has been regarded as a day of worship and rest from the work of the previous week. This political decision will result in the further erosion of the family values upon which this country was built."

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition forwarded to me by Kathleen Zarowny on behalf of the members of OPSEU Local 340. Kathleen is the health and safety co-chair and Local 340 is in the Oshawa area. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario; and

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

I add my name to theirs.

### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has passed Bill C-68, An Act Respecting Firearms and Other Weapons; and

"Whereas we welcome real gun control and support those portions of Bill C-68 which provide tougher penalties for the criminal use of firearms, new offences related to firearms smuggling and trafficking, and a ban on paramilitary weapons; and

"Whereas existing laws requiring the registration of handguns have done little to reduce the number of crimes committed with handguns or lower the volume of handguns smuggled into Canada; and

"Whereas the national gun registration provisions of Bill C-68 will result in a massive misallocation of the limited resources available to law enforcement agencies, with no practical effect on the traffic in illegal firearms or the use of guns by violent criminals; and

"Whereas the gun registration provisions of Bill C-68 will take police officers off the streets and involve them in bureaucracy rather than fighting crime and will make the task of real gun control more difficult and dangerous for police officers;



"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the province of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to repeal from Bill C-68 those provisions for a compulsory registration of all firearms."

I have signed this petition.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Carroll from the standing committee on general government presented the following report and moved its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following report without amendment:

Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation / *Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed. Shall Bill 81 be ordered for third reading? Agreed.

Mr Carroll from the standing committee on general government presented the following report and moved its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 53, An Act to Promote Full Financial Accountability of Labour Unions and Employees Associations to Their Members / *Projet de loi 53, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilité financière complète des syndicats et des associations d'employés envers leurs membres.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed. Shall Bill 53 be ordered for third reading? Agreed.

1520

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BETTER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES ADMINISTRATIONS LOCALES

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 86, An Act to provide for better local government by updating and streamlining the Municipal Elections Act, the Municipal Act and related statutes / *Projet de loi 86, Loi prévoyant l'amélioration des administrations locales en modernisant et simplifiant la Loi sur les élections municipales, la Loi sur les municipalités et d'autres lois connexes.*

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** It's my pleasure today to speak to Bill 86, An Act to provide for better

local government by updating and streamlining the Municipal Elections Act, the Municipal Act and related statutes.

There are a number of things in this bill that are very useful, interesting, and some of them, to be fair, make sense. At the same time as they're being debated, however, the government, with no consultation whatsoever, is getting ready to rob the people of Metropolitan Toronto of their right to responsible, accessible government. It's important to make this link because here we have a chance to discuss and debate some matters of interest to all of us, and we would like to be able to debate what this government is doing around the elimination of city governments. We think it's a problem.

The minister has refused to look at the Golden report, or if he has, he says, "No, it's not workable." The minister has rejected the Robarts report which didn't advocate the elimination of local government. The minister comes back saying: "We have plenty of studies. There are 64 studies that we have on this issue so it's time to move on." So what does he do? He says, "We're going to get rid of city governments."

We think that's a problem. We think it's a back-door kind of politics that isn't fitting of any government. We believe that when you have no public hearings, no public input, no public debate, then we've got a real problem.

This is the style of the government that many people in Ontario are getting accustomed to and it frightens them. And I have to tell you, it frightens me. When you are about to eliminate city local governments and you call that leadership, without any consultation, without any hearings, without any debate, we have a government that is oppressive in the way it deals with public policy. It is unheard of that any government can simply decide to get rid of local governments without giving those local governments and the public they serve a say.

It's ironic that Minister Leach, before he became minister, said, "What we should do is get rid of the Metro government." He gets into government, changes his course and decides, "What we need to do is get rid of local government." It is complicated for the public to understand how they make decisions when the minister himself had one position before the election, gets into government, and lo and behold, we've got another position by that member. We've got a problem. The public has a problem.

We met with the mayors this very morning in fact and they gave us their understanding, their perception of why local government is important to keep, and I have to tell you that I agree with them. As we consult around issues to change municipal elections, we are about to eliminate these local mayors and eliminate local government.

These mayors came to tell us why local government is working effectively, and I agree with them. They told us why local government is important to maintain: because it is accessible. When there is a problem in local government, they go to the municipal local member, because they are the ones who are the closest to the people. They argue that if you get rid of them, it will make accessibility much more difficult and complicated. They argue that they are more accountable to the public, because they're able to talk to and see the local member on a regular



basis; frequently at that. They argue, as Mel Lastman, the mayor of North York, argued, that cities are able to respond to the needs of their local constituents in ways that other governments may not be able to.

I'm not arguing that we should eliminate the Metro government. I don't believe that's the right thing to do. But he argues that local governments are very responsive to the electorate in areas of their responsibility, and they are. He gave one example to show how responsive they are. He talked about snow removal. He said they've developed a system that is able to not just push the snow from the street, which often goes on to the sidewalk, causing a great deal of irritation and anger to the householders, but they managed to develop a system that pushes the snow on top of the sidewalk while at the same time removing it from the sidewalk. He says, "We are the only local government that has done that." That's responding to the wishes of the people in North York. He said, "We pick up our garbage in North York twice a week." Why? "Because," he argues, "we want a clean city and the people of North York want that."

Naturally, the service varies from one municipality to another. The point is, though, that municipalities respond to the various differing needs of each municipality, and that's good.

Before this government engages in changes that are so radical, the public in Toronto, the people I've been meeting in Toronto, say, "Don't change the system without consulting us." In fact many have said, "We've had a referendum on municipal government here in Toronto," and in that referendum they argued to keep local government and get rid of Metro, if that's what they had to do. In that particular referendum, the people of Toronto spoke.

If this government is big on referendums and believes the public should have a say, in Toronto they have already spoken. If they have spoken in this regard, they should listen. They should not set aside that referendum and decide that what we need here in Ontario is leadership. If that leadership means we will not have public hearings, that there will be no public input and that there will be no public debate, this is the worst type of leadership in Ontario. It would be unprecedented for any government to lead in this manner, this manner that we believe, many of us, is very, very oppressive.

Some have in fact said at some of the meetings that if you want to be informed about the way this government is acting, you should read some of the Soviet dissidents, some of the writers who have spoken about the style of leadership in the Soviet Union, to get a glimpse of the way this government is behaving, the way this government is acting. If that's the leadership that they think is what the people want, they've got it all wrong, because that's not what people want. On issues of major importance, the public wants to be consulted and, in my view, deserves and needs to be consulted.

Around this particular issue, we've got a serious political problem. I believe that the issue of city and Metro is a very political issue; it's not an economic one.

I asked Minister Leach in my question to show us studies that show that getting rid of cities would make it more economical. In my question, I said to him that Anne

Golden and the GTA task force that the minister praised said that amalgamation won't work. A study of Ontario municipalities published this year by the Canadian Tax Journal says, "Costs are affected by the quantity and quality of services provided, not by the government structure." A Price Waterhouse study of Ottawa-Carleton done in 1992 said, "One-tier government would increase taxes by 5% to 16%." An article by George Boyne in the journal *Public Administration* says, "Based on US experience, a one-tier system may not lead to greater efficiency" and that "the advantages of a two-tier system have been underestimated." Harry Kitchen, professor of economics at Trent University, Peterborough, says, "Not all services get cheaper with amalgamation."

1530

When I read the research, I'm convinced that this government is in the wrong direction. What studies do they bring to our attention to show us that we're wrong? That's why we say the decision around this has nothing to do with economics but has a lot to do with ideology. It's politics. The reason they decided that perhaps we should eliminate the cities and maybe not Metro was because Golden recommended something different. She recommended a GTA coordination of services with a weaker sort of GTA government but a GTA-type of municipal governance structure. I think it was a very useful suggestion to look at because some of the issues overlap; in fact, important issues overlap between Metro and the GTA.

But the people around the GTA did not support the Golden recommendation, and because the political support of this party is very strong in the greater Toronto area, they decided they should not introduce any policy changes, any governance changes that would anger the Conservative support in the greater Toronto area. In order not to be politically attacked by their friends, they decided that the best thing to do would be to eliminate cities, under the guise of saving money. Study after study that I have referred to say there are likely not to be any savings, so what I have concluded is that the reasons for those things are political, having nothing to do with economics whatsoever.

But we are hopeful that we are going to have in this province a process that will allow the people in Metropolitan Toronto to decide the kind of governance they want. We are hoping that this government will not step over the democratic right of people in this Metropolitan area to have the decisive vote around what kind of governance they should have. We're hoping that the members of the Metropolitan area, Conservative members, are going to convince Mike Harris and M. Leach that they are on the wrong course and that they must consult before they make radical changes of this kind.

While we are looking at tinkering with the municipal process, which in some ways may be useful, sometimes practical, sometimes probably the right thing to do, they are wielding the hammer in dealing with the issue of governance here in Toronto and Metropolitan Toronto at large. We tinker in Bill 86 with many changes that are interesting and useful but, "We're going to rule with an iron fist when it comes to deciding how we're going to deal with the cities of Toronto."



I find that shameful for this government. I find it shameful, and I'm hoping that the people who watch this program through the parliamentary channel will not only call me to tell me that they agree with me but will call M. Leach and M. Harris and let them know. Write your letters to Mr Leach and to the Premier of this province and put on that envelope "Private and confidential," so that it gets directly to their political office. Don't send that letter to the minister without doing that, because if you don't write "Private and confidential," it will go through the civil service and the political staff and the Premier will never see it. The time they will see it is when they're out of office. That's too late.

They need to write a simple letter. It doesn't have to be long. It doesn't have to be an academic study. It doesn't have to be a research paper. Pen or pencil, it doesn't matter. Write on the front of that envelope "Private and confidential." Send it to Derwyn Shea. Send it to him, because I know he's a member who really cares about what's going to happen to Toronto. "Send it to Derwyn Shea because he cares," he says.

When he comes to those meetings he will explain to the public how he's going to defend the right of Toronto to have a say in this matter. Surely this member's not going to go out there not defending a process that should be democratic. Surely he's not going to go into that caucus, as he meets once a week with the Premier, and simply allow the Premier to stomp all over Toronto. He's not going to do that, I hope. If he's going to do what is right, he will defend the people of Ontario, the people of Toronto to have the right to have a say.

Send your letters "Private and confidential" to the ministers. To the local members it doesn't have to be "Private and confidential" because they will get it in their offices and their assistants will show it to them, but to the ministers, that's what you need to do.

If you agree with us, you can't just sit back wherever you are and decide this is wrong and not do anything to fight against what you believe is the wrong course this government is taking us on, this journey that is a mistake to begin with, this leadership by the iron fist that is the worst type of leadership you would want in a democracy. You'll have to write them, you'll have to tell them, because if you don't do that, you will be part of the problem. You will tacitly be agreeing with this government if you're not writing that letter, if you're not out at that public meeting forcing these Conservative members to come to the meetings.

I can tell you from my experience, many of them are not showing up to those meetings. They have an excuse, as always: they're busy, they're somewhere else, they've got another meeting. But when there are tough issues like rent control, where I have been at a number of meetings already in Mr Saunderson's riding, in Mr Shea's riding as well, some of the MPPs don't show up. They don't show up because they're afraid to defend the policies they have introduced in this House. They're afraid.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** The Toronto Club, the Boulevard Club, the Canadian Club.

**Mr Marchese:** They may be at other meetings but it's not political meetings. In fact it's at a club probably.

**Mr Pouliot:** One of those private clubs.

**Mr Marchese:** One of the private clubs perhaps. You never know.

Some of you have a duty. Mr Parker came to a meeting. I will give him that. We had a meeting on rent control and Mr Parker came. He had the courage to come and defend what this government is doing on the issue of rent control, and I respect that. I respect people — politicians — who come to the meetings to defend their policies. There's more respect in that than simply not showing up, for whatever reason. It doesn't matter. You might have a good reason, you might have an excuse, you might not want to show up, but it's important for the public, for the electorate who may have elected you, for you to have the courage to go back into those constituencies and defend yourself and your policies.

This government claims it wants local people to make local decisions. That's what they do, that's what they say, and in the rest of Ontario Mike Harris has said to the various municipalities, "You go out and solve the problems of duplication or inefficiency and amalgamate where you need to." That's what he said to other municipalities across Ontario, but here in Toronto he's ramming his one big government model down the throats of the people of Toronto. It's wrong. Then what else does he do? He hides under the cloak of the David Crombie Who Does What group of people. They hide behind that group of people. It is wrong to allow a group of people behind doors to make decisions on matters that are very important.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I don't believe we have a quorum in the House presently.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Would you please verify if there is a quorum?

**Acting Clerk Assistant (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is not present.

*The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

1540

**Acting Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Fort York.

**Mr Marchese:** What this government has created is a Who Does What panel. Mr Speaker, to you and to the public that's watching, do you know who this group is? Do you know where they meet? Do you know what they do? They are meeting behind closed doors, making decisions for this government. They are the foil for this government's dirty work. When they need them, they use them; when they don't need them, they make them wait so that they can think about what they need to do, and then they communicate with Mr Crombie about the kinds of things that they have in mind. It's a back-door kind of politics.

Is that the kind of democracy we want? People want and deserve to have these kinds of decisions dealt with in a very public, visible, transparent way, and they don't see transparency or honesty in the way we do things when they know there's a group of people, not elected, not accountable, working behind the doors doing the dirty work for this government. It's a perfect foil for the massacre this government wants to hand out to the people of Ontario.



This panel deliberates, and every now and then, like a terrible striptease, they bring out these reports. Every week, every other week, they bring a report, willy-nilly. Let me read you some of these reports here.

**"Who Does What Panel Recommends New Municipal Act:** David Crombie today recommended a new Municipal Act that would give municipalities more flexibility to deliver services taxpayers want at a price they can afford." It sounds like Mike Harris, doesn't it? Sure it does. We get this one week, August 14.

October 11: "Panel Recommends Province Pay Full Social Service Costs: Welfare, employment programs and child care fee subsidies in Ontario should be managed and fully funded by the provincial government."

Another report, November 4: "'Municipalities should deliver and pay for sewer and water systems and municipal transit service,' Who Does What panel chair David Crombie told the province today."

Every couple of weeks you get another report. I've got them here in my hand. Does that give you a sense of a government that is operating under a vision, that is being guided by some vision of what it wants to do? No.

Every couple of weeks you get another report. Here, another one, November 12: "'Municipalities should be fully responsible for setting police budgets and for appointing community representatives to police service boards,' Who Does What panel chair David Crombie recommended today."

November 13: "Province Should Pay Bigger Share of Education Costs, Panel Says: 'The provincial government should take a bigger role in funding education, developing curriculum and setting standards,' Who Does What panel chair David Crombie recommended today."

Every week or every other week you've got this Who Does What, and to whom, with what guidance, what parameters, what principle, what vision? I don't see any vision here. I see this unveiling of this onion on a weekly basis coming through. The public is perplexed by it. They are working behind doors. It's not the kind of politics the people of Ontario want. You can't dismiss the public in this way, you cannot. That's what they're doing. You can appoint a few of your good friends to do the dirty work for you, as you've done, we understand that, but the public is deserving of more. They deserve more than this. They deserve to be able to participate, because that's what democracy is all about.

Democracy is about participation. If you take that right away, then democracy is diminished; then you no longer have a democracy, you have something else, which is what you call leadership, which is an oppressive type of leadership because it tells what's good to the people of Ontario. It doesn't let them decide what's good for them, you tell them what's good for them. That's not democracy.

A number of people I've heard say, "Read a number of the Soviet writers to be instructed about how this government is being guided and is operating." I thought that very interesting. I thought that if a socialist said that they would say, "Oh, my God." But it wasn't a socialist, I can tell you that. The NDP, if we were in power doing that could have been accused of some terrible socialist, even Stalinist, things. We could have been accused of that. But

for a Tory government, my God, eh? I mean, it's a bit odd. But that is your style of leadership. You have gone beyond Conservative politics; you have gone to Reform politics.

I was reading one of — his name escapes me. The Toronto Star; he's a regular writer. It was I think yesterday.

**Mr Pouliot:** It wasn't Walkom?

**Mr Marchese:** No, no. He's a former Tory staffer, a well-know Tory staffer at the federal level. He was saying that this government has crossed the line, that the politics of this government is not Conservative, it is Reform, and it's frightening. People are beginning to understand that that's not the kind of politics they want.

Let's look at some of the changes this government has introduced. As I say, some of them are very useful and some of them are debatable. They have said, "The bill allows municipalities to vote by phone or Internet or whatever means they choose." That to me sounds good; it even sounds 21st century. But if you let everyone vote by Internet, will you be creating a problem for yourselves? Are we going to be able to monitor that in ways that everybody will feel protected, in ways that everybody will feel that we will have no fraud as people vote by phone or by Internet? While it sounds 21st century, I am not sure that we have taken the measures to prevent fraud from happening.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** What are they?

**Mr Marchese:** The member asks, "Who are they?"

**Mr Hastings:** No, what are these measures against fraud?

**Mr Marchese:** We've got a problem. I think voting through the Internet may cause unforeseen problems that we have not yet thought about. I think this government needs to think through, before it passes this particular component of facilitating the voting process, that we put in measures that will prevent fraud. That's important, because I can see it happening. The mayor of East York raised this with me today at the meeting with the mayors. The very point he made is, "How will they prevent fraud from happening?" I agree with him, because that was my initial reaction. While it sounds 21st century, sexy even, I think it can create problems of its own, and we need to be mindful of that.

Others have argued, "Isn't it great that we have made it possible for a 20-year-old computer whiz kid to be able to get into the Internet and from home simply type it in, and there you go, he's voted." But what have we done for older seniors who are going to, as they get older, have more difficulties getting to the poll? Are we making it easier for them to vote, and how are we doing that? The Internet is not going to make it easier, necessarily, because I suspect a lot of the seniors have not learned to use the Internet.

We've got several little problems. First, how do we make it possible for seniors to have an easier time getting to the poll, and have we thought about that? Second, have we thought about how we're going to control fraud in relation to the use of the phone or the Internet or any other means that municipalities might think of?



The government is changing the rules around the election recounts. Municipalities are required to hold recounts if the vote was close. This problem existed in the past and it's led to wide-open interpretations and endless recounts. That is a good thing, that we are finally getting to solving that particular problem. On the other hand, the question I raise is, does this go too far? The only time we're going to have an automatic recount is if there is a tie vote. It may not at first blush seem like a problem. It may seem reasonable: You have a tie vote, you have a recount. Or if the court decides or rules that because of that, there is a right to a recount, then you would have that as a measure. That's fine, but I think it may be going too far.

1550

What this will do, of course, is that for candidates who feel they might want to go for a recount, they will face big court costs to ensure a fair election. In many of these cases, we're going to have a lot of people saying: "I'm not sure I can afford it. Yes, I might have noticed or my election workers might have noticed that there were some irregularities here and there that I might decide to go for a recount." If they do that, they have to pick up the costs, and the costs could be costly.

Not all the candidates who run for politics are rich like most of the Conservative members. By and large, they're well-to-do. Not all the people who run for municipal elections are wealthy individuals. Some of them are just modest-income Ontarians. So if they go for this recount, they've got a problem.

Could the government have decided to define a close election by a certain percentage of the vote and have mandatory recounts in those cases? I think it could, I think it can, and I think you should look at that a little more closely, because simply leaving it to a tie vote may not solve some of the problems that some of the candidates face in those elections. I think we should look at what a close vote might look like, establish some parameters, define a little bit, put some percentage attached to it. I think that would go a long way to solving some of the predicaments that we have seen in the past, in the city of Toronto in particular, with the former city councillor Mr O'Donohue and Mario Silva in the west end.

There are more issues, one that deals with the referendum. Municipalities and elected boards in the province will all have the right to place a referendum item on the municipal ballot without reference to the Ontario Municipal Board, and the municipalities will be able to recover costs when others put referendum questions on their ballot.

In principle, there appears to be nothing wrong with that. But by and large, people like me have a problem with referendums in general, because you never know how referendums are going to attack the rights of minorities in this province, and you never know how the rights of smaller groups of people in society — they don't have to be minorities in the sense that I meant it in the first example — would be affected by the tyranny of the majority.

I am fearful of those kinds of referendums that would complicate political life in Ontario in ways that we have not yet understood. We've seen this process of referen-

dum in the US and some other countries, and I tell you, many people are not happy with seeing what is happening in those jurisdictions.

I am one who believes that election time is the determinant time to be able to displace politicians, throw them out if you don't like them. If you don't like them, that is the time to take a good, hard, long look at the policies of that particular government and decide, "We've had enough." I've already had enough of this Conservative government, but maybe others need more time, others in Ontario need more time to assess whether they have been hurt enough already by this government or whether they need a little more flagellation to make them understand that we are really being hurt in this province. We may need to walk long and hard on the coal and the broken glass. We may need to release our hand from the barbed wire so that then we can see the blood on our hands. We may need to be able to go through all these hard times to decide at the end of the four-year period that this government has hurt us enough.

I don't see referendum as the solution to our parliamentary system, to the democratic process that we have in this country. I don't see that as the solution. This Reform-minded government obviously believes in referendum. They believe in it. It is a Reform party. They will admit to it if you ask them seriously. They like these things, but I'm very frightened of what could happen to people when you put referenda questions that you cannot control.

This particular measure will allow a municipality, a board of education, to put any question it wants on the ballot at any time during its three-year term, and it's dealt with. They no longer have to go to the Ontario Municipal Board. They would be given the right to be able to go and do what they want. They say, "Isn't that great?" The Conservative government will feel so happy to be able to have all these referendum questions on education, on municipal issues, and they will massacre themselves as they do that. Then the provincial government, in its wonderful autocratic wisdom, can come and fix it all for them — or not fix it at all, because they will have done their damage at the local level and they, Conservatives at the provincial level, will look good. So referendum is not the answer for me and I know it's not the answer for many.

I have here a document from the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario. These are the people who provide the professional, expert, administrative support required for the efficient, continuous and professional delivery of municipal services. In relation to referendum, they have a particular problem that they want to be able to address. On the issue of referendum they say the following: "...it's concerned with the lack of any restrictions in terms of timing. As it now stands, Bill 86 would appear to allow an elected body to propose the inclusion of a question on the ballot as late as the day before a special or regular municipal election."

As they argue, and I believe them, the day before a special or regular municipal election, they could, in their view, decide to have a referendum. That could cause some administrative problems. They say, "It should go without saying that this amounts to an administrative



impossibility, fraught with a host of political and procedural problems. In order for clerks to carry out their functions effectively and efficiently, in a regular election, nomination day should be the deadline for the inclusion of a question on the ballot. For a new election or where the question is the reason for the ballot, it is recommended that a minimum of 60 to 90 days prior to notice be required."

They are raising an interesting point. I found it very useful. I found it reflective. These are the folks who obviously have to do the administrative work, and I think that when they come forth with such concerns, we should listen to them. I'm hoping that Minister Leach, who I know is listening from his office, and his staff, of course — I know they're listening as well — are going to take this into account.

Connected to this issue, municipalities will be able to recover costs when others put a referendum question on their ballot. This same Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario has something to say about that as well, and I think we should listen to them again because I think they are right in raising this particular issue.

1600

Subsection 7(1) reads as follows: "Unless an act specifically provides otherwise, the costs incurred by the clerk of a local municipality in conducting an election shall be paid by the local municipality."

**Mr Gerretsen:** That's shameful.

**Mr Marchese:** Not entirely. They have a good explanation here. It is the association's view and understanding from ministry officials that the act that they believe specifically provides otherwise is intended to be that famous omnibus Bill 26, passed earlier this year by the Legislature. More specifically, they say schedule M of Bill 26 provides the authority to a municipality to charge for a service rendered. Bear in mind they're talking about service rendered.

Section 220.1 reads as follows:

"(2) Despite any act, a municipality and a local board may pass bylaws imposing fees or charges on any class of persons,

"(a) for services or activities provided or done by or on behalf of it;

"(b) for costs payable by it for services or activities provided or done by or on behalf of any other municipality or local board; and

"(c) for the use of its property including property under its control."

Note that the clause refers only to services, activities or use of property. Is an election any of these? It doesn't sound like it to me.

"So," they say, "we worry that schedule M is not nearly specific enough to trigger the exemption contained in subsection 7(1)." They say the reference to services in Bill 26 is unclear. It can be convincingly debated that elections are not services or activities, that they are a legislated requirement. "Therefore, it is the association's view and recommendation that the proposed legislation be explicit in its intent by including elections, both special and regular, as an exemption along with recounts and by-elections, analogous to the wording of subsection 7(3)."

I thought it was a convincing argument. I think they have raised a good point. Where municipalities may not be able to recover the costs of these referenda done by a board or utility, that would put municipalities of course in a very difficult financial position. So they are urging the minister to listen to their concern. I, in reading their concerns, found it to be an intelligent reflection of the problem, and they've recommended obviously language that will help them out to solve it. So I hope they will do that.

Moving on, there are other issues. Candidates will have to make a deposit in an amount to be determined by regulation. It will be refunded if the candidate gets a certain percentage of the vote, also to be determined by regulation. Part of this, I suspect, I think they've argued, is to weed out a number of candidates who may not genuinely be there to run seriously for those positions, and perhaps that deposit may discourage some of those not-so-serious candidates. I'm not entirely sure of that, but it may not be such a bad thing.

On the other hand, I wonder and question why this is not put into the bill and why it's left to regulation. Is the government's intent to make the percentage of the vote unreasonably high so as not to permit some of those candidates to be able to get that deposit back? If that is the case, why would they do that? If that's not the case, what have we got to hide? Why not say what we mean? In my view, we could just name a figure or put a figure, keep it low so the system is accessible, and put that in the bill instead of leaving it for regulation. I think that is a useful thing for the government to look at, but we'll see whether the government is listening. They rarely listen to anything the public has to say, so you can imagine whether they listen to the opposition parties.

Let's move on and talk about enumeration. There will no longer be, according to Bill 86, a specific municipal enumeration, meaning municipal enumeration could be combined with federal or provincial enumeration. This may not sound unreasonable. In fact it may make sense, and it does make sense as long as the revisions are done properly and are not victims of this government's cutbacks. Because I have to tell you the cutbacks are serious and I have to tell you, if you don't do enumeration municipally, there will be a lot of revisions to be made.

It will not be the wealthy who will be disfranchised if this happens, because they know how to get on to the voters list. They don't have any problem knowing that there's a municipal election and they understand that in order to exercise that vote they will have to get themselves on that voters list. They will not be the victims of this cutback. The victims of these cutbacks and the victims of these revisions that will have to be done are the modest-income people who move frequently and are hard to enumerate, but they have as much right to vote as wealthy people do. If you disfranchise them in this way, it will be a problem. We should look at that. We should look at how we make sure that when the revisions are done we will not leave anybody out of that process.

I was thinking, and I want to get back to a point because it strikes me, as we are talking about allowing people to vote by phone or Internet, that that's a useful

way to allow people who own property across the province to be able to vote.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** And it's also elitist and classist.

**Mr Marchese:** Of course it's elitist and classist. It allows only the wealthy class, the wealthy individuals to be able to vote in Minden, or wherever they have cottages, because if you don't have to get there — it's hard to get there by car; it takes two hours and 15 minutes to Minden, two and half hours in fact — if you could just vote either by phone or the Internet, isn't that wonderful to allow wealthy Canadians to be able to have 10 votes if they own 10 properties across Ontario. Rich people own a lot of property, not just cottages but properties across this great province.

As some of you know — I'm not sure everybody does — in municipal elections if you own property in another municipality you can vote; that is to say, if you are in North York but you own property in Toronto, you can vote in North York and vote in Toronto, but you have to get there.

**Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber):** Because you pay taxes.

**Mr Marchese:** The Conservative members across the way say, "But they pay taxes."

**Mr Ford:** Yes.

**Mr Marchese:** If you're wealthy and own property they say that's okay because they pay taxes.

**Mr Kormos:** Vote early and vote often.

**Mr Marchese:** It's vote early and vote many times if you can do it by Internet and by phone. Now you can do it. You don't have to worry about getting to Minden because it takes two and a half hours. Now the Internet allows the wealthy people just to type it right in.

I had almost forgotten about that. I think it's an important point. The poor people who don't own property only get to vote once. Why? Because they only pay taxes in one jurisdiction. They're poor. If you're wealthy and you pay taxes, you can vote anywhere you want. Isn't it legitimate and right that the wealthy should be able to do that so they can move around and go and vote wherever they want and influence votes wherever they want? That's all right for the wealthy because they pay taxes, God bless them.

I have another friend whose name is Bill Williams, and he came to my office and said that was a bit unfair. I like Bill and I thought about what he had to say, and I thought about how I might include some of these things into my remarks. Then when I thought about it, I said I'm not sure I agree that wealthy people should have that power to be able to vote wherever they want. Bill Williams said, "It's unfair that people can do that now but I, who don't own the property but pay taxes on that property, am not entitled to vote."

1610

I thought it was a legitimate argument. It was a reasoned argument. I thought: "It's true. If others who own property can vote, why not people who rent them and pay taxes?" So I thought, "It's logical." They should be entitled to. But then I thought, "I'm not sure I agree that wealthy people should have 10 votes or 20 or however many properties they own." So I'm going to

have to disappoint my friend Bill. I know when he sees this he'll be disappointed. I know he has urged this government to make these changes, and I know he was expecting me to support him.

I have to tell you the argument he makes is a very reasoned one. It's logical, but I can't support it, because it would be perpetuating something that's faulty to begin with. It's perpetuating a wrong to begin with. It is perpetuating a problem where the wealthy can continue to do what they want. Because they've got money, they can do what they want. So, Bill my friend, if you're watching or if you see this Hansard, I know I will have disappointed you in not bringing this forward in the way you might have wanted by an amendment to make you feel better. But, Bill, I can't. I think this is a mistake.

Moving on with other changes: The campaign period has been shortened significantly but will be automatically extended to let a candidate clear a debt. That's a good thing. This is important as candidates without big business backing sometimes need more time to pay their debts. I'm not sure that's what they had in mind, that they were worried about —

**Mr Pouliot:** Advertising has been extended, so those with money again —

**Mr Marchese:** This is true. That's right. People with money will be able to advertise however long they want with the big bucks, from January 1; that's right, an extended period of time to be able to send their message to the public. What money can do in this country — the power of money, the power of billboards — it's wonderful. I see these rich people that Mike Harris is encouraging to give back to the community.

We have Mr Jackman, the Lieutenant Governor, giving money, and Mr Jackman is urging all the wealthy friends out there to come and give money. "We need to take control of the arts," he says. Imagine. "We need to take control of the arts." Do you want the corporate sector on your back? Do you want the corporations leading what culture does and should do? I think it's wrong, fundamentally wrong.

You have Hummingbird now, the O'Keefe Centre — well, it was O'Keefe before. Instead of drinking beer, you have a computer system company, Hummingbird, companies taking over. Imagine the kind of publicity for this man. Over a 20-year period that kind of publicity is big stuff. He covers it all. He gets a 20% tax cut and he has got lifelong publicity over there. At the same time, we're supposed to thank these wealthy men for the goodness that they do for Ontario. We have the Lieutenant Governor going out there drumming the drum for Mike Harris, for the wealthy to go out and give more. They take our money, then they give it back and we're supposed to say, "Thank you for saving us." Mike Harris cuts, the rich go back and they save us from Mike Harris's cuts. It's shameful.

It is a shameful, shameful thing we are witnessing in this country, where this government is decimating our services and then asking the private sector to go and help them, put some money back, taken out of the sweat and tears of ordinary men and women of this province. It's our money that we then take from them, that they give



back to us and we're supposed to feel grateful. It is shameful what's happening in this country.

Unemployment is very high, wages are going down, bankruptcies are going up, youth unemployment is up, and this government laughs with smugness and says, "Oh, no, consumer confidence is up." Mr Ernie Eves stands up and says, "Oh, we've created over 100,000 jobs." It's laughable; it's farcical. We have a province that's going down the tubes because of their tax cuts and Mr Ernie Eves says: "Oh no, consumer confidence has gone up by 19%. You should be happy about that."

We've got a problem. When Bob Rae, our former leader, used to say, "We've created 80,000 jobs," and so on, they would laugh on the other side. Now they create 120,000 and they say smugly, "We created 120,000 jobs in this country and consumer confidence is up by 19%."

Unemployment is up, they're firing more and more people, youth unemployment is up, bankruptcies are up, the economy's going down the tubes, the banks are making money, the bondholders are making money, and the country's going down the tubes and: "Oh no, consumer confidence is going up by 19%." We've got a big, big problem. As Rome is burning, we tinker around the Municipal Elections Act. Rome is burning and we tinker with the Municipal Act.

Let me go through some of these. There are a few more things I have to say about this.

Administrative changes to reduce the number of forms and make candidates give surpluses to the clerk only if they exceed \$500: It makes sense. You see that? It's a little thing; it's useful, though. It gets rid of a lot of forms, surpluses — and make candidates give surpluses to the clerk only if they exceed \$500. It makes sense. You reduce the work of the clerk that is not necessary. That's good. Rome is burning and we're tinkering with the Municipal Act. It's in comparison, right? This is what we're introducing here today, that we're talking about today. It's a good thing what I just read, but we've got bigger problems to deal with and they're not dealing with them. In fact they're trying to make the public feel good about how things are going.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Like Nero fiddling.

**Mr Marchese:** Nero is wonderful, yes, with a fiddle and Rome is burning.

There are a few more things here. That's good. It is also appropriate to allow people who declared bankruptcy to stand for election. That's fine, because people shouldn't lose their democratic rights because they have suffered financial hardship. We support this move by the government.

**Mr Kormos:** But it says an undischarged bankrupt, so that their rich friends can —

**Mr Marchese:** My colleague Mr Kormos is going to speak to this afterwards and has got much more to say about these things.

There are a few other measures here in the next half-hour that I've got to deal with because they connect very much to what this government is all about, three important things I'm about to talk about which have been put into this bill. The government is reducing municipal liability in two ways: through a relief from liability for nuisances in regard to sewer and water systems, and

liability for negligence in regard to road, bridge and sidewalk repair.

Remember Mr Crombie behind the scenes, working it and working it, the foil for the Premier to do the evil deeds. They said sewers and water systems should be given to the municipalities. So what does this government do through Bill 86? It's going to give them relief from liability for nuisances. What does that mean? What this means is that the government has slashed municipal support by about 43% in these two years. That means municipalities have less and less money to do what they need to do.

What does this government do to help them out? You can't just take all the time. You've got to give them some tools. Some tools work at times. You notice we've heard about the toolbox, the educational toolbox that never arrived. There are a variety of different toolboxes that this government has that never seem to function or work, but this is another tool they're giving municipalities: relief from liability for nuisances.

1620

The side of the coin about cutbacks is this: If there is a sewer backup in somebody's home, the municipality is no longer held liable. They are off the hook. No longer does a municipality have to pay out — a problem — for a damage that has been caused by a sewer backup. This is to help the municipalities out. Who do you think is going to have to pay for that?

**Mr Kormos:** The poor working stiff who own that house.

**Mr Marchese:** The working stiff, the people who bought a house, who devote all of their energies, all of their money into buying a home. Sometimes the money just barely makes it through to pay for the mortgage for a lot of homeowners. But they are the ones who are going to, from now on, pick up the tab for government. Why? Because the provincial government has decided it's going to give them responsibilities, and with that, it's going to give them the tools so that somebody else will pay.

**Mr Kormos:** It's going to be a little bit of a gift to the insurance companies.

**Mr Marchese:** Who's going to pay? Peter, you're going to talk about that. Someone's going to pay. The poor person whose basement has been flooded is going to pick up the tab, and the poor person who's tripped on the sidewalk, because the government is changing the rules around as well in terms of negligence, is going to pick up the tab. So if you trip somewhere, if you've got a problem somewhere, the government is going to make it possible for the municipality to be relieved from the liability. Isn't that wonderful, what this province has come to?

You can't help thinking that government has slashed grants to municipalities. Crombie is saying the province should get out of the water and sewer and local road business entirely. The municipalities will take them over, and the government wants to give them a gift to ease the blow. That's what it's all about. That's the toolbox; that's part of the toolbox. It's part of the cutbacks, because the income tax cut is so ugly and so evil that they're going to need so much cash in the next six months to a year to make up for that cut. They need cash at hand.



That's why I'm worried they're going to have to go after civil servants. They're going to go after teachers, I can tell you that, with the rollbacks. The preparation time is going to be slowly taken away from these teachers, and it's coming soon. The 5% wage rollback is coming.

It's not just that we fire 20,000 people, we're going to fire them and we're going to take money from them as well. That's what this government is doing. It's giving an income tax cut to those wealthy bankers. It makes me cry to think of where the money is going, because I know the ordinary person watching this program, the ordinary person making \$25,000 or \$30,000, has probably looked at that paycheque and said: "Somebody told me this government was giving me a tax cut last July. Where is it? I'm looking through from one cheque to the other. I haven't seen it. Where has it gone?"

They haven't seen it because the person making \$25,000 or \$30,000 doesn't get any back except for a few pennies. Oh, and user fees and sewer backups, they're going to be paying for that. But the wealthy banker, that banker who makes \$1.9 million, he's going to get back \$130,000 at the end of the 30% tax cut. Can you believe it?

This government says: "Don't worry, this is leadership. Don't worry, those bankers are going to invest their money." I tell you, if you're making \$30,000, you know you're not going to invest one single penny, because if you get \$5 more a week or every two weeks, it's not going to help you to make it through the kinds of costs that you are going to be absorbing because of the cuts in health care, in education and in municipal services.

Garbage: Pretty soon you're going to have to pay for every bag of garbage you put out. Why? Because municipalities are not getting the money, and they have to find ways to raise money. Imagine the chaos. You're going to have people throwing garbage left and right, because nobody, of course, wants to pay.

They've got to find all these crazy ways to be able to raise money. So the five bucks that you, making \$25,000, might be getting out of this income tax is going to have to pay for that kind of fee that's coming up. The poor seniors are already paying it; we've seen it with the drugs.

**Mr Kormos:** How much do Tory backbenchers make?

**Mr Marchese:** The Tory backbenchers are doing fine. They're going to get a few bucks back.

That's what it's about. It's a tax cut that's going to hurt those poor people at the lower levels. It's a tax cut that forces cutbacks against municipalities, and when municipalities are cut to the bone, where do they go? They go in user fees and they're going to hurt the people who have the least, while the government at the same time gives the wealthy, the bankers, more money back so they can invest more in their mutual funds. The government laughs about this when you raise it. They're smug and they say: "No, everything's fine. You guys are scaremongering." Mr Eves says, "Oh, no, 19% consumer confidence is going up." Rome is burning. We are witnessing the burning of Ontario by this government.

These poor municipalities will now have to hurt the local people to make up for those cuts that this government has already passed on and will pass on, more and

more of them in time. The poor teachers are going to be the worst ones, you wait and see. The rollbacks are coming for them, and they're coming quick, because the government needs cash right now. It has introduced measures to make cuts, but money is not coming into the coffers. That's why they held back on that press conference in terms of announcing where the cuts are going to be: because they don't have a clue. They're so confused by it, they don't have a clue how to move.

They need money and they don't have it and they need to think quickly about how to get it. That's why people in the civil service are going to be hit hard and teachers in particular are going to be hit the hardest. Some people say \$1 billion will be taken out of the education system. I argue that \$2 billion will come out of the educational system in one form or another. I tell you, at the end of the day, when this government cuts to make it better, it is not going to make it better; it's going to make it worse.

We have here the nuisance matter, the relief from liability for nuisances, meaning that the poor person is going to pick up the tab. These will be the victims of the Harris government's cutbacks, and we've said that.

Now we move on to another matter. It is always worth repeating, particularly with Conservative members. They need to listen to it seven times in order to understand it, and then, once they've understood it, to decipher it and do something with that information. You've got to repeat it over and over again. It's part of our job here in this role as opposition members.

They are engaging in something else that is happening with this act. The changes are to the Ambulance Act to define when a non-ambulance vehicle may be used. Municipalities will be allowed to set standards for these non-ambulance vehicles. It may not seem so bad, but there are consequences that flow from this that worry many of us and, I'm sure, worry those workers who work with ambulances. I'm sure they're worried about an attempt to reduce the use of ambulances. I feel that's what this is all about. In some instances, this may be appropriate, but it could also open the door to fewer services, open the door to more privatization, and possibly even become a danger to the public.

Privatization: I tell you, when members speak of that, they drool at the thought. They love to privatize because they fundamentally believe in this, but they also want to help out their friends who want a piece of what we offer as a government. They want a piece of the public asset that should be ours to own and to manage and to manage effectively with people in mind, not with profits in mind. When I hear the word "privatization," I see them drooling. I can just picture them drooling at the thought and I picture all their other rich friends out there drooling at the thought as well. They say: "No, we've got to make governments more efficient. So what do we do? We're going to take a bit out of public service and give it out to the private sector, because you all know the private sector does it better."

1630

Well, everybody knows that the private sector does not do it better. Everybody knows that the number one thought of the private sector is to make money, at all costs. That's why we're seeing hundreds of companies,



big companies, laying off workers. I was just reading a *Globe* article the other day and it had a picture of stone bleeding. That's what's happening these days: even stones bleed these days. It was about how workers are picking up more and more of the work because companies are firing more and more of their workers, and of course those who remain end up having to do more. That's what this is all about.

I remember debating Bill 181 with some individual in Ottawa. He was proud. He was one of those private sector guys. He came and said: "My wife works in a bank and she is working long hours now. They cut two or three people from the area where she worked and she is working a lot more." I thought, is this the kind of system that you want, to have banks which make billions of dollars worth of profits firing workers and keeping the few who are left working more hours with fewer dollars? As their wages go down, they end up doing more, because the banks are firing more people to keep their profits up.

I said to this individual who came, who loves the private sector: "Is this the kind of society you want? Are you saying you are happy that your wife is working longer hours and that's the way it should be for everybody?" He didn't have an answer, but that's not the kind of vision I have for working people. I have a vision that people work hard for their money, true. I have a vision that they get good salaries, as they should. But they should have some time to be able to get to their home and do whatever it is that they need to do there. If they've got children, that's a big job; they need time to raise children. If you're keeping them in their workplace doing more, squeezing blood out of that rock, eventually somebody's going to suffer. It's not just that individual family that suffers. Society eventually suffers by the weight of all these problems that everybody is engaged in.

I am not proud of that. That is a very sad, sad vision of the way I want to see society. But that's what the private sector is all about. The banks are about making money. The banks are about using 90% of our money to make money, and then they say, "We are responsible to the private sector." They use our money — small business money, 90% of it — to go and make money, and then they dare to fire workers and they dare to keep the wages low. Then on top of that, to show goodwill, they come up with some charitable donation. They come up with some money to give to the United Way, and don't they look great? Using our money to make big profits for the 10% of the people who invest in their banks and then shamelessly, or because they were ashamed, they had to give some money back to the United Way so they can show that they care about those little people, the poor people. It is blood money.

That's not the kind of society that people should tolerate. It's not the kind of vision that people should have. I'm sure it's not the vision they have, other than this Tory vision of cutting and cutting and cutting more and giving and giving more to those who don't need it. That's not the kind of vision that we have in the north, that we have in the eastern part of Ontario, the western part of Ontario or the southern part of Ontario. That's not

the kind of vision people have, but that's the kind of vision this government is moving into, and it's a pitiful, pitiful sight to witness on a daily basis.

We have yet another insertion in this bill having to do with community transportation. This all looks a bit innocuous at first. Who would be against cooperation in transportation? No one. In fact, our government started a process in the greater Toronto area that is now leading to more integrated transit planning. That is why it's upsetting to see the government try to sneak draconian powers for the minister under cover of something that seems to make so much sense. Subsection 79(6) gives the minister the power to appoint a third party to restructure public transit. This section of the bill is supposed to be all about demonstration projects and pilot projects and the like. But here, Bill 26-style, we see the following. This is what that section says:

"The minister may enter into an agreement with a municipality, local board, individual, corporation, firm or unincorporated association to provide, facilitate, coordinate or restructure community and transportation, including any experimental or demonstration projects related to community transportation."

The problem is that community transportation, in subsection 79(2), is a very all-encompassing definition of public transport. So the question we ask this government is: Why are they trying to sneak — that's the way I see it and that's the way, by the way, the Amalgamated Transit Union, Canadian Council sees it. They say that this government is trying to sneak draconian powers by the municipalities, opposition parties, local transit users, trade unions and others. As if they hadn't already learned their lesson from Bill 26. Or perhaps the who does what to whom process has given the government renewed enthusiasm for sticking it to people when they least expect it.

This particular power in this section was not anticipated by people who have been involved in this for years. Under our NDP government a number of people endorse the community transportation review, which was aimed to bring school busing, transit and other transportation services under one roof. Under our government, however, this process was to be locally driven and the final product was to be under the control of local government. Bill 86 raises the possibility of a centralized, holus-bolus restructuring of the municipal transit industry under the guise of the community transportation review.

There are a number of civil servants we or other people have spoken to who say there is no hidden agenda in that clause, that the intent is still to have local development and local control. They say that the intent of subsection 79(6) is to allow for agreements between the Ministry of Transportation and local providers that would allow money to flow to community transportation projects.

The problem is that this is not what the legislation says. I read it to you, and those of you who were listening and heard realized that the clause, as it's worded, doesn't say that. Some of us believe that the legislation should clearly state that agreements with service providers should only come on the recommendation of the municipalities involved and not simply on the decision of the minister.



If, as the bureaucrats say, there is no hidden agenda, then the minister should be able to agree to an amendment that would deal with the problems we have raised, that other people have raised with the ministry so far.

**1640**

In relation to the particular element I've brought here today, I hope the number of ministers who are involved in this will come together and solve it, because that was not the original intent of what we had in mind when we were talking about community transportation review. If they're serious about doing it in ways that involve municipalities to come up with the solutions for an integrated system, they should not have a clause that gives draconian, Bill 26-like powers to the minister to decide, with whomever he chooses, to amalgamate service or restructure transportation services. That's what that clause allows. It allows for the minister to appoint anybody he chooses to do that kind of review or restructuring. We think that's wrong. We think it's a problem. Either allow municipalities to drive this issue and be clear about it or rethink the way you have presented this position here today.

I understand that the Minister of Transportation is meeting with some of the people from the Amalgamated Transit Union, Canadian Council, on Wednesday. We hope the minister is going to take into account the concerns that have been raised today by me and many others.

**Mr Wildman:** Does that mean we have to keep talking about this bill until Wednesday?

**Mr Marchese:** That's what I was thinking. I thought, "Is this a way to make us speak to this bill until Wednesday?" We're not quite certain of the outcome of the meeting between the minister and those Amalgamated Transit Union people. Is that what the minister wants? I'm not quite sure. "Why else," I was saying to myself, "has he waited until Wednesday to meet with them when he knew this bill was being debated today?" Either we will introduce a motion in committee or the minister can decide on his own to introduce amendments that would take care of the concerns these workers have raised.

**Mr Kormos:** We could move to adjourn the House.

**Mr Marchese:** We could. We could move to adjourn the House to allow the minister to deal with that particular issue, but we'll wait for that. We'll give the minister some time to reflect on this and/or hold it until Wednesday. There's still some time.

**Mr Kormos:** What week was that?

**Mr Marchese:** This Wednesday.

I want to go back to another point that the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario raised as well. I didn't want to be remiss in mentioning it and I will get to their concern. Let me go through it. There are numerous issues they are concerned about:

"We will not inundate you, Minister, with all of our detailed concerns. Rather, we have identified and prioritized our major issues in order to make this presentation more digestible." Imagine, the poor minister would have a digestion problem with this. "Generally our concerns are associated with the electoral process. Our first concern relates to the clerk's ability to certify or refuse nomination papers." It's in a section under 35(5).

As it now stands with this clause, it grants unfettered administrative discretion to clerks to accept or reject a candidate's nomination papers. They say, "We do not seek such wide discretionary powers, nor do we think, as a matter of principle, that they are justified or appropriate in our system of government."

"In order for a clerk to complete his or her duties with minimal ambiguity or legal exposure, the association recommends that a regulatory framework be established that would set out at least some of the conditions or situations requiring acceptance or rejection of nomination papers.

"We recognize that such regulations cannot be all-inclusive and that there must be some latitude for a clerk to handle unique circumstances or requirements. We also recognize that they" — meaning the regulations — "cannot be immutable. They must be flexible and subject to change and adaptation. That's why we support the regulations rather than entrenching them in the statute."

I think in this regard it's all right to put it in regulation as opposed to putting that into the bill. What they're asking for is guidance and limitation or an unnecessary discretion. They prepared some suggestions.

"The association of municipal clerks is prepared, in fact anxious, to work with the government on the development of such regulations. To that end, the association recommends that tests be established by regulation. They include but are not limited to:

"(1) Failure to file the necessary financial forms for the previous election:

"(2) Failure to file a registration form;

"(3) Failure to take the necessary declarations; or

"(4) Failure to provide personal identification to the satisfaction of the municipal clerk upon request."

I believe that their request is a reasonable one and I think this government should listen to them. These are the people who have a great deal of expertise, and when they say they do not want unfettered administrative discretion I think they've got a point and we should, hopefully, listen to those wise suggestions they have made.

We're winding down now to a conclusion. I want to go back to some of the points I made earlier and say that some of the things that are contained within Bill 86 are practical, useful and should be implemented. Some of the questions, some other elements of this bill have raised questions in my mind. I have touched on some concerns I have. I hope the government will look very carefully at some of those areas of concern, particularly as they connect to fraud and the Internet. I would remind the government of that.

As we tinker with the Municipal Act, some of these changes that are small and some that are bigger in nature and constitute, in my mind, some violations, like the ones the Amalgamated Transit Union people have raised, need to be very carefully looked at. The powers they give to themselves, as have been shown in Bill 26, are again presented here under the community transportation review that gives the minister the power to get into any agreement with anybody he chooses around transportation. We feel that is draconian and wrong, unnecessary.

As we tinker with these changes we should remember what I said earlier: that around this megacity idea that



Minister Leach seems to be totally committed to, he is not giving people the democratic right to decide what is right for them to do. They are having taken from them the opportunity to decide what's good for them. The people of Toronto want Toronto to stay; the people of East York and North York, Scarborough, Etobicoke and so on want to be able to have a say. Don't take that away.

1650

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The member's time has expired. Comments or questions?

**Mr Wildman:** I want to congratulate my colleague for a very comprehensive and enlightening exposé on this bill. I think it was important for all members to have the member for Fort York go through each section of the bill and describe those that are desirable and those that have some problems so that all members of the House would be able to share from his experience and understand better the complexities of this very large bill.

I think it's important to recognize that while there are some things that are useful and new measures that are helpful in the legislation, as the member for Fort York clearly pointed out, this is really just tinkering with the changes to the Municipal Act, when there are major problems facing the province and the municipalities and particularly the taxpayers because of the downloading that this government has already done and the downloading that it is proposing to do in the future.

Unfortunately for the taxpayers of this province the Treasurer, the Minister of Finance, did not make clear where the \$3 billion, the further cuts that are being proposed in order to finance the income tax scheme, will be made. So we don't know, but we do know that those changes, those cuts in service will mean probably two things: increases in property taxes and user fees for the municipal ratepayers and the loss of jobs and services.

I think it's important for us to look at this bill in that context, to understand that this bill in itself will not resolve those very serious problems. I think we're all indebted to the member for Fort York for such a comprehensive outline.

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** First of all, I'd like to thank the member from the opposition for the, what shall we say, thorough discussion of the bill. I was somewhat disappointed that the first half of the presentation dealt with the restructuring and the amalgamations of municipalities and the streamlining of local government; I would be the first to agree with him that this is a very important issue, but not relating to Bill 86. Obviously we know the only part of Bill 86 that deals with restructuring are the provisions for allowing the wards and so forth to be decided by local councils.

Having said that, I have some concerns with his assertion that the municipal voters who are property owners and only property owners and not resident in a municipality should be disfranchised in their voting. In fact, we have a lot of municipalities in Ontario where 75% or 80% of the people who pay for the local services in municipalities do not live in those municipalities, and I would find it somewhat disheartening to hear the member from the opposition suggest that these people should be disfranchised and we should just charge them the taxes but not allow them to vote. I don't think that is

a very appropriate way of dealing with the paying for local services and having a say in the level and the type of local service that would be provided.

I also have some concerns with his suggestion that we should look at retaining the present way of compiling a voters' list and not be allowed or we should not look at using other methods, such as using the federal and the provincial voters' lists to reduce costs and have more economical elections.

The other part, I guess I had a little concern about his suggestion that a referendum would take away people's rights.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** This bill must be taken in context of the entire fiscal policy that the government's involved in. That is the streak that runs through this bill. Of course we know that municipalities are joining so many others in paying for the tax scheme this government has perpetrated upon this province. That is where, in a full tax year, when the 30% income tax cut which benefits the rich to the greatest extent is implemented, it will cost the treasury \$5 billion a year, which means the government will have to borrow on behalf of the people of this province \$5 billion additional per year in order to give a tax cut which largely benefits the richest people.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Five billion?

**Mr Bradley:** It's \$5 billion per year, as the member for Kingston and The Island emphasizes. That's the context within which we must look at this bill. Municipalities are being put upon now by the government. I know from time to time AMO may say what you want to hear, but you have to talk to the individual municipalities, not to the structure of AMO, to know what the municipalities are actually thinking. This is also in the context —

**Mr Gerretsen:** You're losing me, Jim.

**Mr Bradley:** This is after the member for Kingston and The Islands has left the executive of that, and some of his friends. I'm sure they're not all that way.

Anyway, what else is contentious is you're doing this at the same time as you're giving the developers a big break. By not allowing the municipalities to levy appropriate development charges, you are putting the money in the hands of the developers, in their pockets. As a result, even some mayors and others who like the government in some cases are distraught about this. My good friend Hazel McCallion in Mississauga is beside herself over this. I can certainly understand that and empathize with my friend Hazel.

**Mr Kormos:** Our colleague Rosario Marchese's analysis of this bill was certainly thorough. I tell you, though, I have some concern about the tone of some of his interpretation of the bill. I understand, I think, the origins of that. There was on his part and I think on all of our parts a tendency to interpret the bill as being in some respects, let's say, somewhat benign or mere tinkering. When I first read the bill, I held much of a similar view, that it was relatively benign for the largest part, other than some atrociously obvious and unconscionable things like section 79 of the bill.

But even as I was listening to Rosario Marchese's analysis, it began to strike me all that much more forcefully that what appears at first reading to be benign and



but mere tinkering ends up being very much part and parcel of a very sinister purpose that this government has, and that is to take democracy away from people and isolate it in the hands of an élite, inevitably an élite that's friends of this government, an élite that's wealthy, an élite that's already powerful in its own right.

So I would put by way of question to my colleague from Fort York, and I would ask him to respond, please: During the course of listening to his analysis of this bill, am I incorrect in becoming more and more sceptical and suspicious about the real purpose behind so many sections in this bill; that in fact it goes well beyond mere tinkering and starts to attack grass-roots democracy in a very fundamental and basic way and in a way that I'm convinced most Ontarians will not tolerate?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Fort York has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Marchese:** I thank the members for Algoma, Oxford, St Catharines and Welland-Thorold for their kind words.

The member for Oxford said that I spoke for half an hour on a matter that seemed to be unconnected, but the government is giving local councils more authority to decide what council members should be called and under what system they should be elected. That's why I linked it to the farcical situation in terms of what's happening in Toronto. While on the one hand they give municipalities this kind of power to decide how they should be called and under what system they should be elected, in Toronto and in Metro they're getting rid of the cities within the metropolitan area. That's how they're connected, and that's why I say it's farcical on the one hand to give cities and municipalities authority over something and on the other hand to abolish them completely. So there was a connection, obviously. I knew the member for Oxford would eventually understand the connection between that and what I just said.

1700

In relation to what others have said, it's true: All this has to do with a tax cut, all this has to do with down-loading, all this has to do with offloading, all this has to do with user fees to fund that tax cut. Most of this, as my friend from Welland-Thorold has said, is tinkering. That's correct: Most of it is tinkering. But there are other nefarious elements contained, he's right, and I touched on them. They have to do with the community transportation review that would allow autocratic power to the Minister of Transportation, unnecessary autocratic powers; and the relief from liability for nuisance gives municipalities power to offload their responsibilities to that poor working stiff who's now going to have to pay. In that guise, it is nefarious while tinkering at the same time.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** It's a pleasure today to rise to participate in this debate on Bill 86, which I believe is a very important and fundamental piece of legislation and clearly in harmony and sympathy with many of the things we said during the election when we talked about less government and less complicated government.

**Mr Gerretsen:** It has nothing to do with that.

**Mr O'Toole:** If I look at the bill, and in talking with people at home today and people in the House — I know Mr Gerretsen with all his municipal background will want to pay very close attention to many of the points I'm going to make because I know how important local municipal government is to you. I'm waiting for your response to my comments today.

**Mr Wildman:** We're hanging on every word.

**Mr O'Toole:** Mr Wildman and everyone in the House today will need to listen because this is really a fairly simple bill that I believe has really been responsive to much of what the smaller communities that I have long represented want. It's An Act to provide for better local government by updating and streamlining the Municipal Elections Act, the Municipal Act and related statutes. Minister Leach introduced this into the House on October 17 and we're now participating in second reading.

I just want to go back into the background of the bill. I'll read it right from the bill so we don't get too far off the topic.

"The bill represents the first phase of a comprehensive rewriting of Ontario's municipal legislation. Its major components are:

"(1) The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, which replaces the existing Municipal Elections Act, and consequential amendments to municipal and other statutes."

I'll go over each one of these in some detail, similar to the member from Utopia's statements a little earlier on. The member from Utopia? We all know who that is.

"(2) Election-related changes dealing with council size and composition and division into wards."

In fact, that's been going on in my riding of Durham East over the past year. They've been very responsible, led by Chairman Jim Witty. He appointed a committee, a committee was chaired by Councillor Larry Hannah, who's from the municipality of Clarington. It was a restructuring committee at Durham region. They've actually downsized Durham region and have sent off their approvals to the municipal board to have those resizings approved. That resizing was very comprehensive. All the member municipalities — I served on Durham region and I know all of them; I know they're committed. It isn't politics, it's just good government: a fewer politicians act similar to Bill 81, which we'll probably be debating later on and in some subcommittee, which I know most of the members here will support, with the possible exception of Mr Wildman. His riding might disappear.

**Mr Wildman:** No, no, my riding doubles in size.

**Mr O'Toole:** Doubles: That's it, yes. You get to share it with somebody else.

This is a very important one: amendments relating to the municipal debt and investment. I remember sitting and chairing finance for four years, and when I was there I was always surprised at how little flexibility was at the local finance department level for their investment strategies.

Amendments relating to the Municipal Liability Act: Anyone who served on local council would know that this has always been a pain for local councils. You have to carry high-cost premiums to cover negligence and liability.



**Mr Kormos:** Being responsible for their negligence has been a pain, yes.

**Mr O'Toole:** They're still responsible for proven negligence.

There are some minor amendments dealing with airport licensing; the assessment update relates to what we're going through right now, an examination of the whole Assessment Act; amendments to community transportation.

There you have it. It's worth listening. I think Rosario, the member for Fort York, made some very strong comments which, in some respects, as I heard him, he was a little bit supportive.

In the notes I've got with me — fortunately, I have a few notes to address what the opposition has said about this Bill 86. I'm going to read the quote and then have you guess who said it, so you may have to listen.

**Mr Bill Grimmer (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** Oh, a contest?

**Mr O'Toole:** A little contest here, yes. "In dealing with the Municipal Elections Act changes, it's very interesting that most of the changes I think we can certainly support."

**Mr Grimmer:** It must have been a Tory.

**Mr O'Toole:** It sounds like that, doesn't it? "The easier we make it for people to exercise their franchise, the better our system will be." Guess who that was? It was Mr Gerretsen, the former mayor of Kingston. That was his comment. I wish he was listening. He's missed it. It was actually quite a good quote. I liked it so I wrote it down. This was the November 18 Hansard. You can see what you actually said in support of Bill 86.

There's another one which I think is quite good as well. This is a contest, but this person who said it isn't here, so in all fairness, I'll give the name first. Mike Colle, well-known municipal councillor for a few years: "I know the minister is talking about using Web sites or the Internet or fax and phone lines to allow people to vote [more easily]. I think that is [worthwhile]." That's Mike Colle. As to the portion that deals with the election process being simplified, I think it's clear there, without me going on at any great length, that it's probably the right thing to do.

Now, you'll never get unanimous agreement on anything. That's clear. We only won by 50% of the popular vote, yet there are 82 members. It's a very difficult thing to get —

**Mr Wildman:** You didn't get 50% of the popular vote.

**Mr O'Toole:** Well, close to 50%. In my riding it was over 60%, but that was easy, because it was a good riding, a riding with a lot of commonsense, hardworking people like myself.

This is another one. I think members here should listen. This is another what I call a supportive quote. "On the whole matter of giving people an alternative way of voting, it's [very] interesting. It will bring the ways that people can vote into the 21st century." Guess who said that?

**Mr Grimmer:** Tom Long?

**Mr O'Toole:** No, it wasn't Tom Long, although Tom has a lot of futuristic ideas. This was Rosario Marchese.

I've got to be careful on that pronunciation; I've run into problems in the past on that. How did I do on the pronunciation?

**Mr Grimmer:** A good supporter of this bill.

**Mr O'Toole:** I agree. The member for Fort York is clearly on record, in that particular aspect, of being supportive.

Before we get into the detail here, other endorsements that are very important: We've tried to work with the municipal associations, whether it's AMO or ROMA, and to listen to those people who've been elected across this province to represent their constituents. These aren't provincial politicians; these are municipal people, with their communities at the very heart of their decision-making process. We somehow get blurred sometimes by a larger view of policies that we're dealing with.

Terry Mundell, for example, president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, said his organization supports the proposed changes — very clearly. He said the new technology could give more voters greater access to the system and increase the voter turnout in municipal elections. We all know that the turnout in municipal elections, for weather and other reasons, lack of publicity perhaps, is very, very dismal, very slow, and it isn't really widely known sometimes who's running.

**Mr Grimmer:** Kind of like the Liberal leadership.

**Mr O'Toole:** Well, it could be confused with the Liberal leadership. There were so many people running, it just went on and on and on. People lose interest after a while, including the TV crews. They all go home and go to bed. Television: Basically, there's a lot of theatre in this job — I have to admit that — since I've been here.

**Mr Gerretsen:** And you're only playing a bit part.

**Mr O'Toole:** Exactly, Mr Gerretsen, and now your part's even smaller than it was, and you're in opposition. You'd better pipe down a little bit, because at the end of the day your vote really is just that.

This is another important comment made by the mayor of Brockville. If you look at Brockville, a community in the eastern part of Ontario —

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** And a great member representing it.

**Mr O'Toole:** Exactly, a great member representing it. Bob Runciman, of course, is the member representing Brockville. He's a minister. I wouldn't suggest for one moment that one of our ministers allowed undue influence, but the mayor from Brockville has said: "I think that it's a positive step. I like the idea of being allowed to open up the polls earlier." That's allowed in this act, to open them up earlier in the day to accommodate people who may be commuting or working different kinds of shift hours etc, accommodating the working person.

1710

**Mr Grimmer:** Dairy farmers.

**Mr O'Toole:** Dairy farmers who are up at 5 in the morning, exactly.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Are you filibustering this bill or what?

**Mr O'Toole:** Look, this is a creative, thoughtful caucus. You see, they're kind of giving me the ideas and we're listening. That's what we do as a government: We listen.

The mayor said he was very supportive of the time changes. Another one here from the member for Kirkland



Lake, Joe Mavrinac. Joe is on the record for many things, but certainly on this one he's on the record here. He seemed to have ongoing dialogue with the previous government on Bill 143. Maybe he's still having the same dialogue.

A lot of this is very good and these changes have been asked for at the provincial government for a long time. They want the bureaucracy cut and they want things to get done. This is the mayor of Kirkland Lake, who is known to be a man to get things done. He's certainly been championing that city for a long time.

But I think this government, as I started out, is a kind of responsive government, with this bill particularly. Let's focus our remarks today on this bill, Bill 86, which is to provide better local government. I'm convinced as I go through my own briefing notes on this that — I'm just going to make a couple of comments. I know Mr Marchese made some, but the most important one that I want to talk about to start with before they give me the cane here — that's when they yank you off the stage — is council size and composition. Durham region, where I am, is primarily in my riding, but I have other parts. Manvers township is in my riding. It includes Port Perry, which is kind of a rural area — it has a council, Scugog council — and it also includes Clarington. The municipality of Clarington has a good council there. It also includes part of Whitby, which has a very large council actually; part of Oshawa, a large council; and this bill is going to allow them to examine downsizing local government, down to perhaps as few as five members on council.

That's a very practical idea. Why should I walk into a council chamber and see 15, 20, even more people sitting around a table, when the population may be less than 50,000 people? It allows them —

**Mr Wildman:** Why don't they get rid of the municipality? Just forget about it.

**Mr O'Toole:** No, no. Using modern technology and highly cooperative within the community — there are other things here that I believe are important. Durham region — I just want to complete that — had gone through a downsizing process which I think was responsive to the people in that area, not the government. Here's a government trying to make the rules a lot easier for them to do just that.

Another small kind of housekeeping issue is the members' titles. As we all know, in cities people are called "aldermen" and in other towns they're called "councillors." To change those titles was a bit of a conundrum and they would have to make application to the Ontario Municipal Board to do that. Now we're making it their choice, a local choice to call their members what they wish. Some of it may not be "aldermen" or "councilmen." They'll find other names, I'm sure.

Ward structures, for example, is another thing that's going on. When they changed the size and representation model for the municipality of Clarington, they changed the ward structure, a very controversial issue; it always is. Certainly we're seeing that in Bill 81, which is the Fewer Politicians Act. As we're trying to move from 130 MPPs down to 103, that reduction of 27 members is in some ridings very controversial. It works out that it's not so

controversial in my riding. In fact, my riding gets smaller.

But how this applies here is, the ward structuring, all of these things had to be approved by the provincial government, when it really affects the local committee or council. That's what we're doing; we're simplifying the process. Those are just a couple of examples: the council composition, the name of what they call themselves and the designation of wards in distributed areas.

Other municipal issues that really aren't that big but I thought I'd like to talk about them include the ability of delegating responsibilities. Councils today have very restricted practices of delegating any of the functions that they perform, but I know in my own municipality that there were inconsistencies across the whole municipality. In the older areas, there were volunteer-operated boards and commissions, almost completely removed from the municipal operations, whereas other things had to be run by the bigger cities. Bowmanville has the largest population and Courtice, a very rapidly growing area, is building a new arena. It has to be run by the town; you can't have the volunteer boards.

This legislation is being amended to clarify that municipal councils may delegate a range of administrative responsibilities to committees and/or staff. This will not enable them to delegate government responsibilities, such as passing bylaws or adopting budgets or cancelling or reducing deferred taxes, but they can perform very useful and sometimes voluntary functions, saving municipal councils a lot of administrative time. That may not really be that important at the end of the day.

There's another one in that area with respect to issues of conduct on municipalities. I read about them. Our municipality never had those problems, but certainly there are occasions when there is misconduct and those can involve a whole range of inquiries. We're streamlining that process as well to eliminate the duplication of the number and types of inquiries that would be required to resolve the situation.

I'm going to wrap up; I'm getting the signal here from the leader of the pack, the member for Oxford. I'm sure I'm saying everything he's going to say.

**Mr Hardeman:** No, you're not.

**Mr O'Toole:** But the municipal liability is one I have some personal experience with. When I was a local councillor, I really enjoyed that function. I know for most of the members here that probably serves as part of their background; very enjoyable, non-partisan, trying to help people solve problems in the most efficient, cost-effective way possible and to make sure that people are treated fairly. That's really what we all want.

On this municipal liability thing, in the last few years I know the cost of insurance — there's one large underwriter for many of the municipalities — has been going through the roof, just absolutely unbelievable. Now I know each of our constituents has the same problem with the ever-increasing cost of insurance, but in this case this liability insurance, for a variety of reasons, has been doubling. The premiums have constituted a kind of double threat for the municipality: the cost of the premiums themselves and also people's desire to sue or take you on for any kind of perhaps dereliction of duty became more of a severe consequence.



I'm just going to say in this part here what I'm talking about in liability. I want to make this kind of clear. Let me just make sure I get my point here. Pardon me. Municipalities want to predict a legal liability so that they can plan. Obviously they have to do things according to the standards and regulations — that's not optional; that isn't what's optional — so that they can buy affordable insurance. They want reform in order to ensure that municipal services the community wants remain affordable and therefore available to the community.

Municipalities have asked the government to reduce and prohibit claims based on acts of omission or performance or failing to perform discretionary functions, not standard or mandatory functions; systems of inspections or maintenance, where in fact we have building inspectors in large subdivisions. I'm not certain they actually inspect every two by four. At the end of the day I think the builder, and in fact the trade, have some responsibility and liability as well. Why should the municipality assume it all?

Failure to enforce bylaws: There have been cases where municipalities generally enforced bylaws on complaint, rather than enforcing them and having full-time people going around nailing people or issuing a summons to someone when it really isn't a major issue. Some municipalities have been held to be liable for not enforcing their bylaws. That's a bit of a dilemma for some smaller municipalities. Certainly larger ones — I was reading this morning in the paper that in Toronto the whole issue of parking tickets is a constant conundrum. They have phoney people issuing tickets with other addresses where the money's forwarded, and they have some that are done by private companies on contract for the city, and then they have the police themselves. So the bylaw enforcement aspect of it is a confusing jungle.

This is really trying to eliminate the nuisance liabilities arising from roads, somebody accusing the municipality of deliberately not maintaining certain standards. But the cost avoidance for the taxpayer — that's what we're all trying to do, avoid needless cost, and certainly there will be a requirement to carry minimal levels of liability insurance. That's a balance, finding out in each municipality —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Grimmatt:** The member for Welland-Thorold wants more money for lawyers.

**Mr O'Toole:** Yes. Liability: The very word itself tells you who's really getting the money: the liability, the lia — lawyers, rather.

*Interjection:* Careful.

**Mr Wildman:** That's "lawyer," not "liar."

**Mr O'Toole:** "Lawyer," yes, not "liar."

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Order, please.

1720

**Mr O'Toole:** Nuisance liability has been around since 1989. I believe we're setting some direction and leadership there.

I'm going to make one more comment. The most important immediate change is to the municipal elections process. Most members here have gone through it. It's

become more and more of a quagmire of forms and applications than anything that I can think of. You're trying to do it, in most parts, on your own without a great big organizational team.

In fact, we're eliminating the number of forms down from some 40 forms that they use today — making application for candidacy, filing your financial statements, all these forms plus the mailers, early elections and all that — down to five different forms, which is going to make it much easier for our clerks in our municipalities. Less paperwork, more jobs: You may have heard that expression before. Frank Sheehan would probably know that expression: less paper, more jobs. That's from the Red Tape Review Commission.

It's much more simplified. Especially, if you think of the application of electronics in the future, whether it's voting by digital phone or voting by other methods, it should be giving the opportunity to avoid some costs of having the election itself. To maintain the validity and reliability of the election is very important in this whole process. Also, the duration of time spent in the election is being addressed. It's being reduced considerably, which is going to save the candidates money and save the people all the nuisance of having all this literature blowing around on their front lawn, because very few people read it.

**Mr Grimmatt:** Does it apply to Liberal conventions?

**Mr O'Toole:** No, it doesn't. It lengthened the Liberal convention. We should have had this act in here and it would have reduced that time. Mr Gerretsen would have been a lot less fatigued today.

The process is far too lengthy. It starts in January. In fact, I believe the elections will occur earlier, which will be a convenience for — it always occurs around November 14 or some time in the middle of November.

*Interjection.*

**Mr O'Toole:** A little bit shorter, warmer weather, a little brighter in the evening.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** But the elections are the same date.

**Mr O'Toole:** There's talk about in the future allowing them to change those dates, which would be earlier, better weather perhaps for senior citizens. That's the kind of flexibility that is in the act. Most of the members in this House today, I have the greatest regard for, even though they may be on the other side of the House. I know Mr Crozier is just saying things there that — all of us have the interest of the community in mind, and at the end of the day, Bill 86 that we're discussing today will simplify the process, make it more streamlined and efficient and accountable at the local level of government, so I'm very much supportive of this and I'm interested in response from those who have been participating in this debate today.

**Mr Wildman:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I'd just like to point out to you that members on all sides of the House have a tendency nowadays, it appears, to refer to other members by their names rather than by the name of their riding or their office, which is contrary to the standing orders. I would hope that you would call them to order.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Algoma, you're quite correct. I would remind the members to refer to



each other by their riding. For instance, I recognize the member for Durham East.

**Mr O'Toole:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I appreciate the member for Algoma. That is my lack of experience, and I acquiesce to you for that experience.

**Mr Wildman:** I wasn't just being critical of you.

**Mr O'Toole:** But I agree. When dealing with the people at home, it's difficult to make those points sometimes. It's more colourful when you mention the member's name, for me.

**The Acting Speaker:** I believe the member was pointing out that all members of the House sometimes make that mistake.

**Mr Kormos:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: On the same point of order, I understand the point that the member for Algoma, Mr Wildman, makes. I confess that from time to time I have indeed —

**The Acting Speaker:** Well, member for Welland-Thorold, you just did it. What's your point of order?

**Mr Kormos:** My goodness, Speaker — okay, exactly the point. I apologize for any of those occasions on which I might have referred to Mr Marchese as Mr Marchese instead of the member for Fort York.

**The Acting Speaker:** Okay, member for Welland-Thorold. Thank you. Take your seat, please.

**Mr Kormos:** I apologize to you, Speaker. I apologize to any members I might have offended —

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, I think I get the point, as do other members. Thank you. Questions or comments?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** On a point of privilege, Madam Speaker: I would like to bring to your attention standing order 21(a), which is referring to the privileges and the rights enjoyed by the House collectively and by members of the House individually, conferred by the Legislative Assembly Act.

I do believe during the speech we just heard from the member opposite, he made reference that the votes of members of the opposition were somehow less worthy than votes of the members of the government. I would ask the Speaker to take a look at that. It seems to me that the government is somehow trying to imply that they are more worthy of this House than members of the opposition, and I would ask you to warn the member on that particular point.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Cochrane South, I didn't hear the member say that, but I believe you're on very thin ice there. I don't think that is —

**Mr Pouliot:** If I have to listen to this until midnight, what about my privileges?

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon, come to order.

Thank you for raising your point. Questions or comments?

**Mr Gerretsen:** The last point that was raised is precisely what I wanted to discuss as well, but I'll do it during this two-minute time period.

The member for Durham East said exactly — and I quoted him, because I wrote it down at that time — "Your vote is only just that." It's very interesting that he should say that, because I'm not sure what he's implying there. I think he's implying that if you're in opposition it

really doesn't matter when they've got such a huge majority. The irony is that here we're talking about a municipal election bill, a bill that talks about how elections in this province ought to be run. We all know that certainly at the local level, there's usually a lack of interest in elections. We're lucky if we get 30% or 40% or 50% of the people out, if it's a really thrilling election.

For the member for Durham East to suggest that the people who vote for the candidates who don't happen to win in an election — that that somehow diminishes their vote is what I would call a direct attack on democracy. I think it just goes to show you the length to which the government will go in its off-the-cuff comments — and I realize it was an off-the-cuff comment. That kind of comment in our democracy is something that we should not only not allow, but we certainly should view it with much disdain and contempt, because that's exactly the kind of contempt they feel about our democratic system.

I know we've got major problems in this province. There is no way that 45% of the people who voted on a given day, which was June 8, 1995, should be able to dictate the kind of overwhelming majority government we have in this province. I think this again shows the reason why, at some point of time in the future, we should go to a representative system whereby the percentage of votes are equal to the percentage of seats.

**Mr Marchese:** Just a few quick things in response to the member for Durham East. First of all, I did point out that there were a number of things which I refer to as tinkering, and some of them are very useful really, such as not posting the voters' list on a post, for example, and others that I mentioned earlier. They're useful, and by and large most people will agree.

On the whole issue of what I had said about voting by Internet or by phone, I probably said in my comments earlier on that it's interesting that we're getting on to the 21st century, but I also indicated when I made my statement then that we've got to worry about some of the concerns that brings. Today I talked about fraud and how we're going to deal with that. I also talked about the problems that someone will have who is very wealthy and owns 10 properties and will now have an easy time to vote in 10 different municipalities. He won't be able to drive there in time to vote in more than one jurisdiction if he's got properties 200 kilometres from here, but through the Internet now he can do it, and I find this particularly unfair.

1730

In relation to the other bill that my friend from Welland-Thorold talked about, there are some other problems that are not so benign. That's why we pointed them out. The one dealing with relief from liability for nuisance is a problem. When you privatize, as I know many municipalities will privatize sewer and water systems, they will not do the same work we have done in the public system with the same kind of accountability. They will have relief from liability when that job doesn't get done well. The poor working stiff is going to have to pay for that, including the community transportation review that gives this minister the power to get into any agreement with anybody to amalgamate services. That is



a Bill 26, draconian style of affairs, it is wrong and shouldn't be in this bill.

**Mr Galt:** First my compliments to the member for Durham East for an absolutely excellent presentation, very thoughtful, with a lot of quotes that were very interesting, especially from the member for Kingston and The Islands; very insightful, some of the things that have been said before, some by the member for Fort York. It's quite interesting just how supportive the members of the opposition and of the third party are of a bill that we've brought in. It's heartwarming to recognize that they're that supportive of what we are doing. It's good to hear the member for Durham East talk about reduction of paper. It'll be a little easier in the future, with this bill, for the clerks of municipalities to look after some of these elections. It has been horrendously complicated and far more red tape than has really been necessary in the past.

This bill certainly blends in very nicely with Bill 81, the reduction of numbers of provincial politicians. Certainly that one is long overdue. The member for Algoma just mentioned a few minutes ago how thrilled he was to have a riding that's going to be much larger in the future, looking forward to getting a new helicopter to cover it with.

The member for Fort York made reference, and so did the member for Durham East, to the new methods of voting. I think it's time we looked at new methods of voting. I'm sure if the Liberal Party had last Saturday, they wouldn't have been into the mess they were in that went till 4:30, 5 o'clock in the morning. We have to look at ideas like Internet and at ways of phone-in voting and we do have to be concerned about fraud, but with modern electronics that certainly can be looked after. We have to look ahead to the next century and to modern technology that we will have to work with.

**Mr Bisson:** The general comment I would like to make to the member for Durham East in regard to his presentation is a recurring theme that we hear from government members on a very continuous basis in this Legislature: the notion that somehow there seems to be, on the part of government members, a sort of contempt on their part when it comes to public services and government in general.

The whole point of public services is to have public accountability. There is in some cases a system that has many more checks and balances in it when it comes to public services, but for a reason. I get somewhat frustrated when I listen to the government members say that if something is run in the public service it's somehow inefficient or not well run at all. We can look at many examples in the private sector, at everything from the failed Canary Wharf that we saw a few years ago to other companies that are much more bureaucratic, in some cases, than government is generally. I would say to the member opposite that there is a place in Canada, there is a place in Ontario, for government to play a role when it comes to delivery of services. In those cases it makes perfectly good sense for the government to run those.

The other thing I want to say to the member opposite is that in his speech, and I alluded to it in a point of

privilege a little while ago, he made a comment — I take it that it was an off-the-cuff comment, but it disturbs me somewhat, and this is why I raise it — that somehow the government members' votes are more important in this House and somehow more valued. I think that really is a lack of understanding of what the tradition of Parliament is all about and what the tradition of the Legislature is for.

We are all elected by members of our constituencies, we come to this Legislative chamber to represent the people of our constituencies and we vote according to our own consciences in representing the people of our ridings. For a member of the government to come here and somehow allude to the fact that his vote is more important than somebody else's I think is sadly mistaken.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. The member for Durham East, you can sum up.

**Mr O'Toole:** I thank the members from both sides of the House for their comments. The purpose of the debate is grow and learn and understand, and certainly I am able to learn and listen and take many of the comments in stride.

For the member for Kingston and The Islands — the issue was also brought up by the member for Cochrane South, with respect to the importance of your vote — I meant it in a rather off-the-cuff way as your vote is just that: your vote. Each of us has to examine our own integrity, and that's the truth. I really mean that. Whether we vote on party or other issues — we certainly see that on private member's day — each one of us should keep that clarity in mind. I'm not saying that in a lecturing sort of way. I find the most mean thing here for me personally is to be completely denigrated or criticized in the same kind of form or expression as the member for Cochrane South who, in a critical way, is called a "backbencher" — or "government backbenchers."

The truth is that if we're all elected representatives, that's the dignity I would like to be treated with, and some days I sit here during the debate and don't participate as much; I don't get the same sense of respect and decorum I would like to see. Each one of us, I'm sure, wants to see more of that. I know that people watching want to see it.

The member for Fort York talked about the 21st century. I think we all believe that we have to look forward, not backwards, that we can learn from history or we're doomed to repeat it. I've learned that the penetration of the vote and the number of people participating had to be addressed and I think much of that is looked at in this bill, to help people with disabilities and other kinds of situations, where they can participate in the public process. We have television today. When the original bill was drawn up, we didn't.

I want to conclude with that. A great friend of mine, Mr Galt, the member for Northumberland — I can call him Dr Galt and I mean that respectfully — has helped me immensely. His comments today just build that confidence I need to move forward with the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. *Report continues in volume B.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLd  
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell  
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries  
Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Burlington South / -Sud	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)</b> Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Carleton	<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC)</b> Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie	Leeds-Grenville	<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC)</b> Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London North / -Nord	<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Comwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	Markham	<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC)</b> Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Don Mills	<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC)</b> Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamarie (L)	Mississauga North / -Nord	<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC)</b> Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC)</b> Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Durham West / -Ouest	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	Nepean	Baird, John R. (PC)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)
Eglinton	<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William (PC)</b> Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme	Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Nickel Belt	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nipissing	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)</b> Speaker / Président	Oriole	Caplan, Elinor (L)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L)	Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)	Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaitre, Bernard (L)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)	Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)	Ottawa West / -Ouest	Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)		
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)		
Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)		



Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Parkdale Parry Sound	Ruprecht, Tony (L) <b>Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.</b> (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Scarborough North / -Nord Scarborough West / -Ouest Simcoe Centre / -Centre Simcoe East / -Est Simcoe West / -Ouest	Curling, Alvin (L) Brown, Jim (PC) Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) McLean, Allan K. (PC) <b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Perth Peterborough Port Arthur Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)  Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury Sudbury East / -Est Timiskaming Victoria-Haliburton	Bartolucci, Rick (L) Martel, Shelley (ND) Ramsay, David (L) <b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Quinte Rainy River	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC) Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	Waterloo North / -Nord	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Renfrew North / -Nord Riverdale S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	Conway, Sean G. (L) Churley, Marilyn (ND) <b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b> (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Welland-Thorold Wellington Wentworth East / -Est Wentworth North / -Nord Willowdale	Kormos, Peter (ND) Amott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Toni (PC) <b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles</b> (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
St Andrew-St Patrick St Catharines St Catharines-Brock St George-St David	Bassett, Isabel (PC) Bradley, James J. (L) Froese, Tom (PC) <b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Wilson Heights Windsor-Riverside Windsor-Sandwich Windsor-Walkerville York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L) Cooke, David S. (ND) Pupatello, Sandra (L) Duncan, Dwight (L) <b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Samia Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie Scarborough-Agincourt Scarborough Centre / -Centre Scarborough East / -Est Scarborough-Ellesmere	Boushy, Dave (PC) Martin, Tony (ND)  Phillips, Gerry (L) Newman, Dan (PC) Gilchrist, Steve (PC) <b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b> (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs	York East / -Est York Mills York-Mackenzie Yorkview	Parker, John L. (PC) Turnbull, David (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ron Johnson  
Marion Boyd, Robert Chiarelli, Sean G. Conway,  
Ed Doyle, Garry J. Guzzo, Tim Hudak,  
Ron Johnson, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston,  
Gerry Martiniuk, John L. Parker, David Ramsay,  
David Tilson, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Amott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Alvin Curling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Joseph Cordiano  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Jim Brown,  
Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Joseph Cordiano,  
Alvin Curling, Brenda Elliott, Morley Kells,  
Peter Kormos, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Frank Sheehan,  
Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Ted Chudleigh  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tim Hudak  
Ted Arnott, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown,  
Annamarie Castrilli, Ted Chudleigh,  
Douglas B. Ford, Tim Hudak, Monte Kwinter,  
Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips,  
Gilles Pouliot, Joseph Spina, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Jack Carroll  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bart Maves  
Jack Carroll, Harry Danford, Jim Flaherty,  
Bernard Grandmaître, Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese,  
Bart Maves, Sandra Pupatello, Lillian Ross,  
Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona,  
Len Wood, Terence H. Young  
Clerk / Greffier: Lynn Mellor

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo  
Rick Bartolucci, Bruce Crozier, Ed Doyle,  
Douglas B. Ford, Gary Fox, Michael Gravelle,  
Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren,  
Gary L. Leadston, Dan Newman, Peter L. Preston,  
Tony Silipo, Bob Wood  
Clerk / Greffier: Donna Bryce

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Ted Arnott  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Hastings  
Ted Arnott, Rick Bartolucci, Dave Boushy, Tony Clement,  
Carl DeFaria, Bill Grimmett, John Hastings, Ron Johnson,  
Frank Miclash, Gilles E. Morin, John R. O'Toole,  
Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffier: Lisa Freedman

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John L. Parker  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tom Froese  
Elinor Caplan, Carl DeFaria, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese,  
Doug Galt, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Rosario Marchese, Margaret Marland, John L. Parker,  
R. Gary Stewart, Bill Vankoughnet, Len Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Dalton McGuinty  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mike Colle  
Marcel Beaubien, Dave Boushy, Gary Carr,  
Mike Colle, Bruce Crozier, Brenda Elliott,  
Gary Fox, Steve Gilchrist, John Hastings,  
Gerard Kennedy, Shelley Martel, Dalton McGuinty,  
Gilles Pouliot, Toni Skarica  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Smith  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Dave Boushy, John Hastings,  
Tony Martin, John R. O'Toole, Trevor Pettit,  
Sandra Pupatello, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Tony Ruprecht,  
Mario Sergio, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Resources development /  
Développement des ressources**

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Barbara Fisher  
John R. Baird, Jack Carroll, David Christopherson,  
Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Dwight Duncan,  
Barbara Fisher, Steve Gilchrist, Pat Hoy,  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Bart Maves, Bill Murdoch,  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Président: Richard Patten  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Gerretsen  
David S. Cooke, Tom Froese, John Gerretsen,  
Michael Gravelle, Helen Johns, W. Leo Jordan,  
Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Julia Munro,  
Richard Patten, Trevor Pettit, Peter L. Preston,  
Lillian Ross, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum



# CONTENTS

Monday 2 December 1996

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Leader of the Opposition</b>	
Mr Patten .....	5465
<b>Education reform</b>	
Mr Patten .....	5465
<b>World AIDS Day</b>	
Ms Lankin .....	5465
Mrs Munro .....	5467
<b>Slow-moving vehicles</b>	
Mr Galt .....	5465
<b>School bus safety</b>	
Mr Hoy .....	5466
<b>Tenant protection</b>	
Mr Marchese .....	5466
<b>Drinking and driving</b>	
Mrs Marland .....	5466
<b>Environmental assessment</b>	
Mrs Pupatello .....	5466
<b>Hospital restructuring</b>	
Mr Laughren .....	5467

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Child poverty</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	5469
Mr Harris .....	5469
<b>Education financing</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	5470
Mr Snobelen .....	5470
<b>Fiscal and economic policy</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	5471
Mr Eves .....	5471
Mr Pouliot .....	5471
<b>Health care reform</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	5472
Mr Wilson .....	5472
<b>Economic statement</b>	
Mr Phillips .....	5472
Mr Eves .....	5473
<b>Child care centres</b>	
Ms Lankin .....	5473
Mrs Ecker .....	5473
<b>Environmental protection</b>	
Mr O'Toole .....	5474
Mr Sterling .....	5474
<b>Development charges</b>	
Mr Gerretsen .....	5474
Mr Leach .....	5474

## Family support plan

Ms Lankin .....	5475
Mr Harnick .....	5475
<b>Ontario film industry</b>	
Mr Parker .....	5475
Ms Mushinski .....	5475
<b>Long-term-care reform</b>	
Mr Sergio .....	5476
Mr Jackson .....	5476
<b>Municipal restructuring</b>	
Mr Silipo .....	5476
Mr Leach .....	5477
<b>Time-share fraud</b>	
Mr Newman .....	5477
Mr Tsubouchi .....	5477
<b>Mental health services</b>	
Mr Ruprecht .....	5477
Mr Wilson .....	5477

## PETITIONS

<b>Hospital restructuring</b>	
Mr Bartolucci .....	5478
<b>Omnibus legislation</b>	
Mr Kormos .....	5478
<b>Abortion</b>	
Mr O'Toole .....	5478
<b>Education reform</b>	
Mr Cleary .....	5478
<b>Child care</b>	
Mr Martin .....	5478
<b>Bloor Village Video</b>	
Mr Shea .....	5479
<b>User fees</b>	
Mr Ruprecht .....	5479
<b>Ontario Correctional Institute</b>	
Mrs Boyd .....	5479
<b>Court challenges program</b>	
Mr Grimmett .....	5479
<b>Long-term care</b>	
Mr Michael Brown .....	5479
<b>Teachers' preparation time</b>	
Mr Wildman .....	5480
<b>Public libraries</b>	
Mr Galt .....	5480
<b>Beer store openings</b>	
Mr Gravelle .....	5480
<b>Occupational health and safety</b>	
Mr Christopherson .....	5480
<b>Firearms control</b>	
Mr Tilson .....	5480

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on general government</b>	
Mr Carroll .....	5481
Report adopted .....	5481
Mr Carroll .....	5481
Report adopted .....	5481

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Better Local Government Act, 1996,</b>	
Bill 86, <i>Mr Leach</i>	
Mr Marchese .....	5481, 5493, 5497
Mr Wildman .....	5492
Mr Hardeman .....	5492
Mr Bradley .....	5492
Mr Kormos .....	5492
Mr O'Toole .....	5493, 5498
Mr Gerretsen .....	5497
Mr Galt .....	5497
Mr Bisson .....	5497

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Leader of the Opposition</b>	
The Speaker .....	5467
Mr Harris .....	5467
Mr Hampton .....	5468
Mr McGuinty .....	5468

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 2 décembre 1996

## DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 1996 sur l'amélioration des administrations locales,</b>	
Projet de loi 86,	
<i>M. Leach</i> .....	5481

CA20N  
X1  
-023

Government  
Publications



No. 131B

N° 131B

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 2 December 1996

Lundi 2 décembre 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 2 December 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 2 décembre 1996

*Report continued from volume A.*

1740

## BETTER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES ADMINISTRATIONS LOCALES

Continuation of debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 86, An Act to provide for better local government by updating and streamlining the Municipal Elections Act, the Municipal Act and related statutes / *Projet de loi 86, Loi prévoyant l'amélioration des administrations locales en modernisant et simplifiant la Loi sur les élections municipales, la Loi sur les municipalités et d'autres lois connexes.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Further debate?

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** It's a pleasure for me today to have the opportunity to stand and speak on the second reading debate on Bill 86. Speaker, much the same as when we're interviewed on television they always say, "You can't say hello to your family back home," I'm in a similar position today. If you'll indulge me, I got started on this debate later than anticipated and there's a lovely lady from my home town, my wife, who's here in Toronto.

*Applause.*

**Mr Crozier:** Thank you, and thanks for giving me the opportunity to tell her: "Go ahead. I'll catch up with you later for dinner."

Having said that and also having told everybody back home that I am taking my wife out for dinner tonight, I would like to speak to this bill in all seriousness. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to a bill like this, where essentially we're in favour of the bill. There are many parts of the bill we can support, but it does give us an opportunity to comment on those and what it might mean to our municipalities.

As some of the members would know, and as the member for Durham East mentioned earlier, many of us have municipal experience, so we know the effect that some of the legislation we deal with can have on our local municipalities.

I come from a riding that's made up mostly of small urban and rural municipalities. At the present time, there are somewhere in the neighbourhood of 12 or 13 municipalities in my riding and they're all small urban and rural. We know we have over 800 municipalities in this province, and this legislation therefore is going to affect a great many of them, if not all of them, and a great many of those are going to be the smaller municipalities.

I'd like to address my comments to the area of finance, to that of liability, and then maybe touch on the area of voting.

To begin with, I read with some interest recently a report on property tax assessment reform, and this comes from the Tax Equity Alliance. Certainly as we get on into the legislative calendar of the government, we're going to have the opportunity to speak to various issues when it comes to the taxes of the municipalities we represent, but there are some interesting comments I'd like to have as part of the context of what I'm going to address. Out of this report, they say:

"Municipal governance, disentanglement and property tax reform are all ambitious undertakings, but like building a new house or renovating an old one, there's a certain order to getting the job done right. How many levels of government, and which level should deliver and fund the services? That needs to be sorted out first. The next logical step is to determine how those services which end up at the local municipal level should be paid for, and separating those which should be financed strictly by user and licensing fees from those which should be funded by a general levy against each property. The final and most difficult step is determining the nature of general levy."

In the area of finance, initially I would like to say that this bill, although it's general in nature, has a lot to do with finance, has an awful lot to do with finance at the local level. We know that what's going to happen is that subsidies from the province are being reduced constantly, and eventually may be eliminated altogether. If that's the case, as this bill allows, municipalities need a different way to finance themselves. In fact, I think that's the whole reason behind this: that this government knows it's going to continue to reduce the grants to municipalities, and they've said, "If we're going to do that, we have to give municipalities the opportunity to have a more flexible way of financing themselves."

When I say that, I'm not necessarily in favour of reducing grants to municipalities. That brings in the idea of downloading, because we know the municipalities still have to carry on these services, so that then brings up, as I mentioned a moment ago, the fact that there have to be licence fees, there have to be user fees.

At the same time the current provincial government is lecturing municipalities on how efficient they should be, it's interesting to note that municipalities have been much more efficient than provincial and federal governments when it comes to financing the services they have to provide. Municipalities, as we all know, in the past couldn't incur debt unless that debt was set up on a schedule for retirement over a period of time. Provincial and federal governments haven't quite operated that way.



This government, for example, as it's preaching that that should be done, is going to go out and borrow money. They're going to borrow money to finance a tax cut. It's difficult for me to understand how the government can preach to its partners, or so-called partners, on how efficient they should be and how they should reduce costs and how they should limit their borrowing, and yet the government of Ontario can continue to increase an already unacceptable debt by going out and borrowing the money.

As we're talking about finances for local and municipal government, which in my estimation have been very well managed over the many decades, it's interesting to note that while this provincial debt is increasing on borrowed money, while the government is going to have to spend \$12 billion a year just to finance its tax cut, the provincial debt will rise from what it was in 1995, from around \$100 billion, to somewhere in the area of \$120 billion by the time this government's mandate is finished.

I can't understand how on one hand they talk to municipalities about having better ways to finance themselves, better ways to pay for services, when they would run the provincial debt from \$100 billion to \$120 billion. What that will leave us with at the end of the term of this government is a total debt of around \$120 billion, for which I think each party should bear responsibility. The Liberals, for example, will be responsible for \$5 billion of that debt. The previous government, and they came through a very difficult economic time, will be responsible for somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$90 billion of that debt, but this cost-conscious, cost-cutting, fiscally conservative government will have run their share of the total debt from the \$35 billion they were responsible for when they were out of office 11 years ago to \$55 billion. They'll have a great responsibility for a certain part of that debt.

Now, municipalities need flexibility. They need to be able to manage their own affairs, because as they become more responsible this is going to become more necessary. One of the things that I'm a bit concerned about, though, in giving them that responsibility is the fact that we keep saying we want more local autonomy. That's what they're doing with this bill in fact, giving more local autonomy, yet what they're doing with other legislation they're proposing is that these municipalities are going to be getting bigger at the same time. The problem there is that even though they have more local autonomy, the local taxpayers find government growing away from them.

I encourage the government to be consistent in its message. If you want the local taxpayer to have more autonomy, more input, then when it comes to the encouragement of local municipalities to amalgamate, we have to be careful because we're making them bigger and therefore to some extent taking them further away from the taxpayer.

Others of my colleagues have referred in this debate to liability. I concur with many of their observations that for local municipalities their cost of liability insurance has increased almost out of reach, although municipalities have to have insurance, just like the rest of us, so they therefore have had to bear much of the cost of that liability insurance. A local municipality still has to

remain responsible — they can't abdicate all of their responsibilities — so in limiting this liability I support the government.

What we have to advise the taxpayer, though, the residents of and the businesses in the municipalities, is that, for example, when those once-in-100-years storms come along, which end in many basements being flooded at great cost to the taxpayer, this in itself is a kind of downloading on the taxpayer. If the municipality is going to be immune from having to pay those costs, we all know what's going to happen; that is, the costs of the householder, the person who owns the home and has insurance on the home, are going to go up. In some communities now, they can't even get insurance for sewer backup, for example.

We have to always keep in mind that one action by one level of government can, and usually does, have an effect on another level of government or, in this case, may even have an effect directly on the taxpayer.

Also in the area of liability, the municipalities will be excluded from being sued, it would appear, if their streets are in some sort of disrepair. This is probably one of the more difficult ones, because how do we really know what that level of repair should be or what the condition of those streets should be?

#### 1750

We all know that the weather conditions in this province — we have freezing and thawing, particularly here in the south — have caused a great deal of wear and tear on our streets and highways. We know that almost all municipalities, if not all, keep their roads and streets in repair with good conscience, but we all know as well that occasionally there's going to be the odd pothole or two. I hope that if we have those potholes, we continue to have the Minister of Transportation's suggestion, his promise to us as he did last year, that he'll actually come out and fill those potholes.

This is an area we're going to have to be careful of because a municipality can't abdicate all its responsibility and simply let its streets and roads go into disrepair. But if they're not going to pay for damage caused to automobiles, it increases the municipality's responsibility to see that those streets are kept in repair.

We know that part of the reason they're going to have a more difficult time doing that is because of the costs incurred. Again I refer to municipal finances. They have to be very careful with their finances. A related issue, because Bill 86 also has an effect on the authority to borrow, is the Development Charges Act, which we know we'll be debating in the very near future. Under that, we know that municipalities are not going to be able to charge 100% of development charges on development in their community. In fact, we know that some municipalities have already stopped developing their community because of the possibility of this act coming along.

When we have growth-related projects like streets and sewers, even though they're in a brand-new part of town and of no benefit to anyone else in that community, the general tax levy is going to have to pick up 10% of that cost. We feel, through experience, that developers' margins, they have felt, have been narrow enough up till now. If we think that all developers are going to pass on



the savings in that 10%, we might find ourselves disappointed in the future.

Even more than that, the general levy in a municipality will have to pay for 30% of the net capital cost of other services like libraries, for example, like recreation centres. That's going to put an undue burden on the general taxpayer, because municipalities won't be able to afford simply to do that. As we all know, there's only one taxpayer and there's only one source of that funding.

Everything we do, although we might put the emphasis on the flexibility of a municipality to do it, in one way or another is going to affect that local taxpayer, so we have to be very careful how we do it.

I said I'd like to talk a bit about voting. In my time on municipal council in my home town, which was about eight years altogether, I certainly was concerned about the fact that we have trouble getting the voter out to vote, getting some enthusiasm up. I don't know whether we can do that by legislation.

We always want to make it easier for the voter. In fact, this bill has suggested a general way that a municipality will have more flexibility in how it can handle voting, how it can handle voting lists, how it can handle the actual vote itself. There are two ways to look at that.

I have always thought that the right to vote or the privilege I have of voting should not be taken lightly, that they should not necessarily make it easier for me. As we all know, there are people in many areas of this world who would crawl on their hands and knees through broken glass if they were given the opportunity to vote.

So, should we make it easier for our electorate to vote? Yes, we should make it convenient; we should always provide convenient polling stations. We should always do everything we can for the convenience of those who may find it physically difficult to get in or out of voting polls or for those who are elderly who may find it difficult. But whether we want to bring voting entirely into the computer age, where you can simply sit home and vote, I'm not so sure. That privilege should be one we have to give a little bit of effort to.

With Bill 86, where there is a great deal of flexibility and it's looking for original ideas on how we can change the way we vote today, I hope we don't make it so easy that voting isn't, in our mind, a very honoured privilege that we have.

Oftentimes what really gets the voter excited is what the issues are, who the candidates are. That, to me, should continue to be the focal point of why local elections should be interesting. It's always interesting to me, and this is just an observation as a side issue, that for example there doesn't seem to be as much interest in who's running for school board, yet school boards generally, in the municipalities I'm familiar with, spend more than 50% of the tax revenue a municipality has to collect. Yet it seems that people aren't quite as interested in who the members of the school board are, and that's always been of some minor interest to me.

I've brought up those areas of finance that I'm concerned about, the areas of liability that I think we should continue to look at, because it isn't so cut and dried that to reduce the cost to a municipality of liability insurance — it isn't just that which we should be after. We

want to find the best way to reduce the cost of liability insurance to municipalities but we don't, I think, want to allow them to simply abdicate all responsibility in that area.

In the area of voting, I think we want to look at ways of encouraging the electorate to come out and vote. It's a privilege that wars have been fought over and have been won for us. But at the same time I'm not so sure we should make it a system of voting where it would be difficult to identify who is casting that vote, because one of the principles we live by is "one person, one vote."

As a final note, over the next several months there will be many reforms put forth regarding local government. I sincerely hope that all members of the Legislature, especially those with the unique experience of having served on municipal government, will look at these reforms with a view to giving citizens better government as being the bottom line. Giving citizens better government is what we're really after. It can't be only to reduce or downsize, cut, slash. Local government in Ontario has worked over the decades because it's evolved thoughtfully, over time, with the full participation of our constituents and with their full consultation.

**1800**

I know we have some consultation going on, and we always appreciate that. However, I hope the reforms we bring forward in this House flow from thoughtful consultation and are not merely some sort of thoughtless justification for an effort to downsize and download on to municipalities. Those are the comments I have on this bill. As I said at the outset, we will support the bill in second reading, and I hope that as it goes to committee some thoughtful amendments will come to it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? The member for Cochrane South.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I have a couple of minutes to respond to the member's comments. I think there are some positive measures here, as the member has said, in trying to deal with looking at how we run elections municipally. Madam Speaker, I notice I've got six minutes on the clock for a two-minute response. This is interesting.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you for pointing that out. Could you reset the clock, please.

**Mr Bisson:** I would just point that out to you. There are some points in this particular bill that deal in a positive way with trying to reform — I hate to use that word loosely — the system of elections municipally, but there is in that some danger.

I think the member for Fort York had pointed out, just as the previous member pointed out, that there are some real dangers in moving towards allowing, for example, balloting to be done by telephone or by modem through computers. It might sound okay up front, it might sound like a perfectly — as the government would put it — commonsense way of doing things, but I think we can't forget what the whole process of an election is all about and why people before us and our forefathers set up the system the way they did. It's important that people themselves take the time, first, to inform themselves about whom they might be voting for, but second, to go down to the polling station.



The only time I would be in support of seeing people given the ability to phone in their ballot or do it by modem should be in fairly restrictive cases. In cases where people are housebound and can't get out I think it makes a certain amount of sense to be able to say, "Let's allow special circumstances for those people to be able to vote through those means." But to allow just every voter out there that kind of ability to send in their ballot through the phone or modem, I don't think that's how far the government wants to go. If you start going down that path, I think there's a certain danger.

On one hand the government wants to see higher participation at the municipal election level, but it could have a bit of a reverse effect on the voting thing. It just sits badly with me. It's important that people take the time to walk down to the polling booth to mark their ballot, to do that in a physical way rather than just trying to do it by way of a modem or telephone. With that, I would like to thank the member very much for having participated in this debate and I look forward to hearing some more.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** It certainly is enlightening to hear some of the remarks of members of the opposition bench in the context of admitting that there are at least some positive innovations in this particular bill. What confounds me, however, is that we have a situation in which both opposition members seem to have a strong ambivalence or reservation about some of the technological innovations.

For the life of me I cannot understand what is so dangerous about making it more convenient for people to be able to vote, particularly in a time when people are so rushed today. If they are computer literate, if they have access to the ballot, if there are checks in place, then we ought to proceed down the road, absolutely, towards getting more people involved in democracy, not fewer by putting some sort of phoney restriction on them as to whether they are able or disabled or not. If you are disabled, housebound, and you are computer literate, you should be able to access the Internet or any other means to vote in municipal elections. If the phone system is the way to do it, so be it. For the able-bodied, if they want to go and vote at the polls physically, no problem.

What's wrong with advancing the uses of technology into the 21st century whereby we have more people involved in democracy? That's the fundamental line we're trying to deal with in this particular bill, the Better Local Government Act. For members to put up phoney arguments that there can be computer fraud — there are means and ways of counteracting that. All they have to do is read *Wired World*.

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** I'm pleased to make some comments on the fine remarks made by the member for Essex South, Mr Crozier. I'm going to speak very briefly to one issue. The events of this weekend, where the Liberal Party was so very pleased to be in this city with our convention, have left me with diminished voice strength.

The issue of liability as it pertains to municipalities has been relayed to me by all concerned in my riding, mayors and reeves, that they do seek some relief in regard to liability insurance. As a matter of fact, I brought up this

issue in a previous bill in regard to shortline railroads, that if municipalities were to take back or buy shortline railroads they were very concerned about liability insurance along those lines; the railroad lines I'm speaking of. Of course they were telling me that they were already spending huge amounts of money for liability insurance and it was difficult to acquire any more.

We welcome the idea of reducing liability insurance costs and nuisance claims. However, we must recognize that we can't simply do away with all the liability a municipality must be responsible for and that we must be very careful that citizens are protected.

I also note that the provincial government has down-loaded a lot of roads in my municipality in particular. Yes, there was monetary settlement, but it is not enough to maintain those roads forever.

I have some concerns around the liability nuisance claim issue, but I know the municipalities would welcome some relief in that regard.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I listened very carefully to the member for Essex South. There's no doubt that there's a lot of information in this particular bill. On some items there's no problem agreeing with him, but there is a lot of uncertainty in here. A lot of things in here at the end of the bill look very similar to Bill 26, the bully bill that was rammed through the Legislature last January. It leaves so much open to allow the minister, at his discretion, to order a third party, and it could be a private company, to go in and take a look at transportation and suggest that it be privatized. You're looking at making a lot of major changes.

For example, with the discussions going on in the greater Toronto area now, are we going to have municipal government in Toronto with the new and bigger city or is it going to be people appointed to those positions? What is going to happen? When you have Bill 86, if there isn't a good and lengthy debate and people getting into the details of what is in each and every section, we don't know what can happen. Sure, we're talking about the way municipal elections are being held, but people are very suspicious after they saw what happened with Bill 26. With any piece of legislation coming forward, people are saying, "Let's take a good look at it and see if there's not something in here that will give the government in office at this time under the leadership of Mike Harris the right to eliminate a lot of the things that are so dear to the people in this province," so I'm sure there's going to be debate on through the night, probably till midnight tonight, on this particular bill.

**1810**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The member for Essex South has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Crozier:** I appreciate the comments from the members for Cochrane South, Cochrane North, Essex-Kent and Etobicoke-Rexdale.

I don't want to be misunderstood when I speak about making it easier for voting in municipal elections. Anyone who is housebound, for example, can use the proxy system. My concern is identification as much as anything. If it becomes so simple — the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale said we should take advantage of all the technical assistance we have. If I were to carry that



to a conclusion, I guess I could say: "Rather than attending House when the bells start to ring for a vote, maybe we could just vote from our office." I mean, that's where most of us are. I wouldn't want to see that. Also, if an election is held, as municipal elections are, in November, maybe we should just make it easier for those who go to Florida for the winter to vote.

I'm saying there are two areas. Don't make it so easy that voting can be done anywhere almost at any time. In doing that, I just caution that we have to use a means of voting, because we believe in one vote for each individual, that it's serious enough — it's a very serious business — that we are able to identify who the voters are. If we suddenly had turnouts of 99%, I'd be a little concerned that the old adage "Vote early and vote often" might be the case. We just have to be careful when we're doing it, because voting is a privilege.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Cochrane South.

*Applause.*

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you, but I haven't even started yet.

I would like to take this opportunity to limit my comments to sections of this bill that deal with transportation. As the NDP transportation critic, there are, particularly around section 79, concerns I have in regard to the direction the government is taking through this legislation.

Although Bill 86 deals primarily with issues around municipal elections and the financing of municipalities in regard to how they can raise much-needed money for capital and also deals somewhat with the question of referendum, section 79 of this bill deals with transportation and transit authorities, and I'd like to get into that specifically.

First of all, I want to say up front that there are sections of this bill that are a step in the right direction, but when it comes to this section 79, it can be divided into two parts. The first part of section 79 deals with how to try to bring together a coordinated service for the utilization of transportation vehicles within various ministries and community agencies out there. For example, you may have in a community such as Timmins an organization such as the Association for Community Living. You may have the children's aid society. The Ministry of Health may have facilities to offer transportation to the disabled community. One of the problems we have across the province is that there is not a very good coordination of all those services.

For example, in Timmins we've worked a long time with the municipal transit people through the city of Timmins to try to figure out a way to increase Wheel-Trans to the people of Timmins. It gets frustrating at times, because the municipality only has a certain amount of money. The province used to transfer over a fairly good sum of money to municipalities for transit. That's all going to be gone in two years after this government has finished reducing transit — but that will be for another debate.

The municipality itself never really has enough money to offer the type of service that the disabled community needs just to be able to function, not for frills. We're not talking about frills here for the disabled community; we're talking about being able to call for transportation

to go to a doctor's appointment, to go shopping, to go to the bank and to do the things that you and I take for granted. It's frustrating from their perspective, because they look around the community and they say: "Look at that, the Association for Community Living has a vehicle that is perfectly suitable for the disabled community" — a small minivan. The children's treatment centre may have the same type of facility.

What this bill tries to do is something that we as government had embarked upon, the community transportation action plan, which I'll talk about a little bit later. That would have coordinated all those services and said, yes, the Ministry of Health has the ability to own a van and operate it and so do individual provincial agencies, but there needs to be some coordination of all those vans so that it's not just the city of Timmins transit authority vans available to the community for transportation for the disabled, but that you're able to draw on all those other services from other ministries. The bill tries to address that, but it stops short. It just basically says it's a possibility under this bill, but it doesn't do anything towards actually reforming that particular issue.

I would note that under the leadership of Gilles Pouliot, the Minister of Transportation under the NDP government, we had struck together the community transportation action plan, which was basically a plan that said, here's what we're going to do about trying to manage all the transportation services within a community so that there is efficiency and we don't have individual dispatching systems across a community, Timmins or Toronto or whatever it might be, for all individual kinds of services, but that all the dispatching would be done centrally and all the management of the maintenance of the vehicles, how that system runs, would come under one roof. With the work that had been done by Frances Lankin, the then Minister of Health, the whole question of community long-term care was also part of that, so truly we were moving to a system where we were looking at health care not just from the perspective of institutions and dollars and cents, but also about how you use the dollars and the facilities in the community much better.

That's what the community transportation action plan had set out to do, and the government comes forward in Bill 86, under section 79, and attempts to try to speak to that to a certain extent. As I say, the government is not taking the extra step, which is to put in place a system of coordination — not at all; they're just saying it's a possibility under this bill. The second thing, and more important, is that the government is not putting the dollars forward needed to support such a system.

In fact many people in Ontario don't know this, but come two years from now, the province of Ontario will not be delivering one red cent to municipal transit authorities in the province. It's the truth. Each of the municipalities across the province will be entirely responsible for the delivery of transit services within their communities, both on the capital and on the operating side. That is very troubling because while the city of Toronto may be fairly progressive when it comes to offering transportation within the urban community through the TTC and really tries to do a good job of



using public dollars run by a public institution called the TTC, a service for the commuters, other communities across Ontario may not be so forthcoming in trying to deliver those services because, quite frankly, they're not going to be able to afford to offer those transit services.

I fear in many communities across the province — possibly in London, possibly in Sarnia and, who knows, maybe even Timmins — the city councils and the town councils across the province, in trying to deal with the downloading this government is doing by the province taking away transfer dollars from the municipalities, will be stuck in a situation where they're not hoping to have the money to offer the service. A council is going to sit around the council chamber one evening two or three years from now and is going to have to make a decision: "We have lost the entire transit subsidy from the province of Ontario. Can we still afford to offer transit services to our residents?" What will happen is that in many cases we will lose transit service altogether within communities. That is just the way it's going to go, because in many communities municipalities can't deliver the service on their own.

It's really unfortunate. What we're seeing is that the provincial and federal governments are really in sync on this one. You've got Mr Chrétien at the federal level, along with Mr Martin, and in this case Mr Harris, along with his finance minister, Mr Eves, embarking down the same slippery slope, that is, they're going to block funding. They're saying that in the future, rather than the federal and provincial governments, as they have in the past, where they used to transfer dollars over tied to a service — in other words, the province had a program for transportation, and if the municipality wanted a subsidy for transportation it had to adhere to certain provincial policies. It was the way that the provincial government was able to control, to a certain extent, the level of service and the quality of service we had in our municipalities.

1820

But the provincial government now is moving away and going to block transfers, where they say, "Here's the total amount of money you're going to get," which is going to be a lot less than they're getting now; probably a third of what the total dollars in provincial transfers were in 1995 is what's going to be available two years from now. Municipalities, in exchange for having lost that money — and for communities, it could mean as much as 40% to 60% of their entire municipal budgets. If you're the community of Black River-Matheson in northern Ontario and you lose subsidies in the way this provincial government is cutting that community, you're going to be left with, if you're lucky, a loss of around 40% to 50% of your entire budget. And how are they going to offset this? The province is saying: "You as a municipality are going to be able to do absolutely anything you want when it comes to whatever service. If you want to privatize, go and privatize. If you want to contract out and get rid of your unions, go out and do it. If you want to eliminate an entire service, go ahead and do it, because we're not going to tie the dollars to any particular program."

That's what's going to happen to transit authorities across the province. In fact, in section 79, and I'll go into the detail, this particular bill gives the municipalities or gives the province in many cases the ability to do just that, and spells it out very clearly in the bill.

People won't remember this, because what I'm referring to is legislation that was passed in this House many years ago, but under the Metropolitan Toronto act of some years ago — I forget the year it was passed — the provincial government of the day, a Conservative government, gave the transit authority in Metropolitan Toronto the exclusive right to deal with urban transportation. They said: "We recognize as the Conservative government of the day that we need to regulate to a certain extent the area within the Metropolitan area under one jurisdiction." That way, you'd have an efficiency of scale, one management, one corporation, one public sector entity that would deliver everything in transit, the buses on the street, the streetcars and the subways underground. They said, "We will make that an exclusive right of Metropolitan Toronto to deliver that service."

It was done for a reason, and what this government is doing through this act is taking that away. Under 79(4)(1.1) and also under subsection (5), you're giving the municipality the ability to chop that all up into as many pieces as they want. If you're a commuter in the city of Toronto and you look at your transit system today, if you were for some reason to leave and come back five years from now, your transit system will be totally different, and I don't think it's going to be a step in the right direction. There are all kinds of examples of how this deregulation process we've undertaken in other areas, such as in trucking or in the airline industry, has actually ended up costing the taxpayers more money in the form of higher fares and also, quite frankly, has dropped the quality and dropped the frequency of service to many communities, and I'll get into that a little bit later.

But what this bill specifically does is that you're saying under subsection 79(6) that "The minister" — and under subsection (5) it's a municipality — "may enter into an agreement with a municipality, local board, individual" — that's really interesting — "corporation, firm or unincorporated association to provide, facilitate, coordinate or restructure community transportation, including any experimental or demonstration project related to community transportation."

If you go through that whole section, you're basically saying that the municipality of Metropolitan Toronto can, if it chooses, once this bill is set, do a number of options. They can say, "We want to chop up the TTC." They'd be able to do it under the power of this act and there's nothing that anybody can do about it other than trying to apply pressure on Metropolitan Toronto. I hope they don't do that, but they will have the power to do that, or they may turn round and say, "We're going to enter into an agreement with carriers from outside the jurisdiction of the city of Toronto."

For example, you may have in the city of Vaughan a transit service that brings people from the city of Vaughan to the most northerly subway stop or bus stop of the TTC. Jurisdictions are drawn out under the agreements I talked about a little while ago under the Metro-



politan Toronto act, and what they're going to allow to happen in this particular bill is that the city of Vaughan or the individual private carrier will be able to drive their buses in competition with the TTC within the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Toronto. What you'll end up with is a system where you're going to have competition within the boundaries of the city of Toronto for that transit service.

You might think, at first blush, that this is a positive thing, you know, that somehow competition is better and the private sector does it better and the public sector can't do anything right. All of that mantra is going to be repeated. But what you're going to see happen through this bill is an erosion of what the TTC is now, to the point where you're going to end up in the long term having a much lesser system of urban transportation in Toronto.

Let me just give an example, and I think it's quite poignant. We find ourselves today, in December 1996, in a situation where Canadian Airlines is basically facing bankruptcy. It's a private sector corporation, right? I turn the clock back to the days of Brian Mulroney when they deregulated the airline industry. At the time, prior to Mr Mulroney doing this, we had one central Canadian air carrier, owned by the public sector, called Air Canada. Air Canada worked on a fairly simple principle. It said, "We will offer services" —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** It was much better than what we have now. You have no idea what you're talking about. Listen, I've got to fly every weekend to this place. Tell me.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Bisson:** I just woke up the Tories. That's really good.

The point I'm making is that before deregulation Air Canada had a mandate, and the mandate of this public corporation was very simple. The mandate was that Air Canada would offer services across the country to municipalities throughout — east to west, north to south, within our country — and they would have to subsidize some of the less populated routes by using the dollars they were making on the more populous routes. For example, they would make money on the route from Toronto to Montreal or Montreal to Quebec City or Toronto to Timmins, and then they could afford to offer services to other communities that otherwise would not have air services.

Under privatization, when they deregulated the airline industry and Mr Mulroney, I think a cousin to Mr Harris in his politics, privatized the airline industries, we ended up having a situation where we sold off Air Canada —

I notice that we don't have a quorum in the House, Mr Speaker, and I would ask you to check to see if there is a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum in the House?

**Acting Clerk Assistant (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Acting Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Cochrane South.

**Mr Bisson:** As I was saying, if we look at the example of deregulation and the privatization of Air Canada, we see that we've gone from a publicly controlled airline that provided services from coast to coast to coast in our country and did it at a rate less than we're paying now to assist them, to the situation where we have moved to private corporations — Air Canada and Canadian Airlines — basically competing within the market of Canada for the same business. Where we find ourselves today is that Canadian Airlines is in the hole to the tune of tens of millions of dollars. They're not able to keep that company afloat, and now they're going off to the workers at that particular airline and they're saying, "We want you, for the third time, to give us concessions," and somehow or other, by the workers giving concessions, it will save the company. I don't often agree with Mr Hargrove, but on this particular point I think Buzz is right.

1830

Buzz, in this particular case, is saying, "Listen, you can give concessions all you want, you can give concessions till the cows come home, but the point is that this corporation is out of control." This company is not making money because it's got management problems — a private sector corporation, I would point out — and it is having problems when it comes to market share.

Canadian Airlines used to operate out of the city of Timmins. They don't any more because they were not able to get into a profitable situation in competing with Air Ontario. The point I'm getting at here is that what we've ended up with is that we've gone full circle with deregulation. We were promised at the outset that if we deregulated the airline industry, service would go up and dollars — I believe we don't have a quorum again, Mr Speaker. I would ask you to check for quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you please check for a quorum.

**Acting Clerk Assistant:** Mr Speaker, a quorum is present.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Cochrane South.

*Interjection:* Eighteen? Come on.

**Mr Bisson:** The clerk needs to learn how to count; we're going to do this again. Now we have a quorum; they've snuck in.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** Nobody snuck in over here. I see two sneakers coming in right now.

**Mr Bisson:** Mr Speaker, did I hit a raw nerve here?

**The Acting Speaker:** I'd like to remind you that I think that was provocative.

**Mr Bisson:** Provocative?

*Interjections.*

**Mr Bisson:** Here we go. The point I'm getting at is that the government, under this bill, is moving to a system where it's going to deregulate the transit authorities within the province, namely, the TTC and others, by allowing a number of things to happen when it comes to how those particular entities are structured.

If we look at the example of what's happened in the airline industry, we were promised that with privatization we were going to get increased services, we were going to get cheaper prices and we were going to get a more



frequent service by moving to private air carriers in competition with each other. What have we ended up with? Our airline tickets are three times the price they were prior to deregulation.

We used to fly from the city of Timmins to Toronto under Air Canada on a DC-9 jet that took 55 minutes at a price of about \$180 prior to deregulation. Some mere six or seven years later, under deregulation, the price has gone to \$600 for a return ticket. I don't see the private sector in this case being any more efficient. I would argue that the private sector is actually inefficient as compared to the public sector corporation because the difference with Air Canada, as a public entity, is that the entire airline offset certain routes so that people were able to fly for reasonable rates within this country, not just people who happen to fly from the city of Toronto or the city of Montreal.

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am intrigued by the member's insight into the operations of Canadian Airlines and the airline transportation industry, but could he keep his remarks focused upon the bill that's before us today?

**The Acting Speaker:** The matter of talking on the subject is a point of order.

**Mr Bisson:** The member is a parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I believe. The bill deals with transportation as it affects bus and transit services within Ontario. I'm making —

**Mr Shea:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It is with pride that I carry the responsibility as parliamentary assistant, but I will remind the member that it is not my responsibility to be concerned with the federal jurisdiction of transportation such as Canadian Airlines.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr Bisson:** Again, the point is that as we move to a system of deregulating and privatizing transit authorities within municipalities, the government will argue that the private sector will do it for less, that it will offer more competitive fares to the transit users and that it will offer better service. The point I'm making is that in cases where we've already deregulated transportation and other sectors, such as federally controlled airlines, as the parliamentary assistant pointed out, quite the opposite has happened.

We have gone, as I said, from a system of a regulated, publicly owned corporation called Air Canada flying return from Toronto to Timmins for about \$180 on a DC-9 jet in 55 minutes to where we find ourselves today flying on a twin-engine Dash-8, which is a nice aircraft for a small commuter, on an hour-and-a-half flight with inferior service compared to what we found with Air Canada in regard to the comfort of the aircraft, because they're really not the same aircraft, and for a much higher price.

The government argued that if the private sector did it, we the consumers would be the benefactors because we would end up paying less for our tickets or we would not see increases any higher than they would be under a publicly controlled airline. It is more expensive now by three times.

Also on the question of safety, we have proven that where governments have deregulated truck transportation,

both provincially, I might add, and federally, we have seen safety go out the door, to the point that municipalities in Ontario, like the municipality of Vaughan, are moving themselves to reregulate the trucking industry within their own boundaries, which is quite an interesting turn of event. Vaughan, not being known as a social democratic bastion in favour of regulation, is moving on its own to regulate because it recognizes that deregulation has been a disaster when it comes to truck safety in Ontario.

In fact the Minister of Transportation of the province of Ontario, under our government prior to deregulation but especially now under the current government that's deregulating, is moving fast and furiously trying to figure out how his government is going to deal with truck safety. The government has a bill before the House right now — I think it's Bill 82 or 83; I forget the number offhand — that deals with the whole question of how we're going to deal with road safety overall as it affects truck transportation.

The point I make is that the government is, through this bill, giving municipalities the ability to go out and deregulate transit authorities, open them up to competition, with the private sector coming in and possibly taking over some of the routes, or in some cases privatizing them altogether. The government will argue, and the municipal governments will argue then, when it is being done, that it's going to be more efficient and it's going to be better when the private sector does it. I just want the record to show that as a New Democrat I'm saying that ain't going to be the case.

There are perfectly good reasons why we decided some years ago that the public sector would play a very important role when it comes to public transportation. We said in the case of transit that if we wanted to offer a uniform service to the people within our communities, you needed to have efficiency of scale to a certain extent. It took a fair amount of money to offer a service because the ridership in many cases is not strong enough to leave it entirely in the realm of the private sector, because if you can't make a buck in the private sector — and this is not their fault, it's just the way it runs — you're not going to offer the service. When the municipalities lose their transportation subsidies from the province when it comes to transfer payments in two years, municipalities will really be bent out of shape trying to figure out how to scramble to save services and communities.

We are seeing today in communities across Ontario the frequency of trips of transit buses and other vehicles being reduced. I've seen it in the city of Timmins. The Amalgamated Transit Union, ATU, people in the city of Windsor are telling me that indeed that is what is happening. In the city of Hamilton they're reducing the number of buses out on the road in regard to how often they run and do particular runs. The point I'm getting at is that the government has a very strong role to play when it comes to making sure, first, that we have some provincial policy that deals with how the transit authorities are to operate but, second, that the province has a responsibility when it comes to the dollars going into them, because if the province does not transfer the dollars on to the municipal-



ities, the municipalities themselves are going to get rid of the service.

The other thing I find kind of interesting here, and this is a little bit of a side note, is that the government, in this bill, is increasing the ability of municipalities and the minister to hold referendum questions on municipal ballots. We know that the government, on another particular endeavour, is moving in order to bring referenda legislation to Ontario so that the public can be more directly involved in deciding public policy. But what's passing strange is that when it suits its purpose, the government closes the door to the public when it comes to having their say through referenda.

That's what I really find very difficult to take from the government. You'll remember that about this time last year there was a very big controversy in the province in regard to Bill 26, the omnibus bill. One of the things the omnibus bill did back then — and we warned what had happened, that this was a mistake — was that there was a provision in certain acts that said that if the municipality was moving to privatize let's say a PUC — a public utility corporation — or a transit authority, as might be the case under this legislation, there needed to be a municipal question. There had to be some sort of referendum so that the people had their say. You couldn't just privatize a PUC without the public themselves having their say about how that should or should not be done.

1840

The government took away the right of the people to express their will when it comes to the privatization of public utility corporations such as hydro or water and sewer, whatever it might be, including transit authorities. That's gone. It's been taken out by Bill 26. And in this very act, Bill 86, which we find ourselves with today, the government is coming back and saying, "We're going to give people — municipalities — the right and we're going to give the minister of transportation or others the ability to be able to put referenda questions on municipal ballots."

Well, you can't have it both ways. Either you're for them or you're against them. Either you're for referendums — and you should have a clear policy, as a government, that deals with referendums — or you're against them. You can't have it both ways.

I heard the Premier musing just the other day in a press scrum that he did in regard to a particular issue. They were talking about whether the city of Toronto should have a referendum in order to decide which way that municipality's going to be restructured. Should it be a megacity? Should it be individual cities such as Mayor Barbara Hall and others are purporting? The Premier at that particular point was opting away from referenda. He was saying, "Oh no, I don't want a referendum there," because I think he knows what the referendum result would be: People would unanimously support their local councils and would not support the option put over by the Minister of Municipal Affairs for one big megacity.

The other thing I want to point out, just in the closing moments I have here, is that I was reading in the Toronto Star on the weekend a fairly interesting article about Minister Leach, and it went on to talk about his pet dog, Tory. What is really interesting here is that the minister

has a dog that he spent some \$10,000 on last year, trying to do everything from sending it to obedience school to getting its stomach pumped because it ate something that wasn't too good for it, or fixing up shoes or trying to fix different things.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** Exactly.

The point I'm getting at here is that you've got a government that's pretty out of touch. Here you've got a guy who's responsible for public housing in Ontario, people who are trying to live in some cases on less than \$10,000 a year, and his dog Tory gets more money than most people in this province do living in public housing. I think that says something about some of the decisions we got from this government.

The other point I'd like to make is that the minister has sent his dog Tory to boot camp in order to be able to train the dog to be a better dog. Well, the dog flunked boot camp, which I thought was interesting. So maybe at the cabinet table the Minister of Municipal Affairs can talk to the Solicitor General about not doing boot camp for the citizens of this province when it comes to young offenders as even his dog was not able to pass that particular trick.

On that, Mr Speaker, I'd like to thank you for this particular opportunity to debate.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments or questions? The Chair recognizes the member for Welland-Thorold.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Thank you, Speaker. Thank you again, quite frankly.

This has been a full afternoon of debate over Bill 86, as was indicated earlier, and I was a little concerned about the nature of some of the interruptions of my colleague Mr Bisson. There was an attempt to obscure what in fact were the very pointed remarks he was making by someone suggesting that they weren't what the bill was all about.

The reality is, though, that Bill 86, like so many other pieces of legislation this Harris Tory government has rammed through this chamber, is about far more than what it appears to be on its face. My colleague was speaking very much to that. He was speaking very much to the fact that this is part and parcel — this is all the little pieces of a puzzle. Some of the pieces are bigger than others, but at the end of the day there's a particular vision of Ontario that the Conservative government has and it's a vision that, quite frankly, we New Democrats don't share. We don't share it with great passion and our distaste for it is profound.

There's one portion of Bill 86 that's tantamount to — what was it? — schedule A of Bill 26, which again was touted as, "See, here you are," as if to suggest that's what Bill 26 was about. Bill 86 is very much about far more than permitting municipalities to become more effective. It's all about attacking municipalities. It's about the process of destroying democracy at the grass-roots level. And again, in some respects so much like Bill 26, it is about the minister securing for himself some very specific powers that are designed to diminish and eliminate the powers of municipal councils.

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** I listened with interest to the comments of the member for Welland-



Thorold and to the member for Cochrane South whose speech I listened to. I listened basically to a speech which was ideological, a speech that said: "I am against privatization. I am in favour of regulation. I'm in favour of lots of regulation." We know what that means because we have experience with it: It means high costs to consumers; it means lots of bureaucracy; it means governments transferring and entangling their services; it means more bureaucrats, not less bureaucrats; it means more government, not less government, and in the end, it doesn't serve those people whom we are all elected to serve, that is, the taxpayers of Ontario.

I'd remind the honourable member for Cochrane South that we all serve just one taxpayer, whether we serve as elected representatives at the municipal level or the provincial level or the federal level. A tax is a tax is a tax, and the families of Ontario have had their fill of taxes in recent years from all levels.

Our government is trying to take a practical approach to look at the real problem, which is entanglement and multiplicity of services. If we can simplify matters, which the Better Local Government Act seeks to do, then we move towards less cost, less government, less service and happier families in the province, because they'll have more disposable income rather than be sending more income to their municipal government, their provincial government and their federal government. Whether it's GST or PST or municipal property tax, whether it's going to the school board or to the municipality or to the province, a tax is a tax, and there's only one taxpayer in the province.

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell):** To tell you the truth, I'm really concerned about this Bill 86 also, referring to my friend from Cochrane South when he says that we are in a way going towards privatization. When we start to play around with the security of the Ontario public, we have to be in deep trouble, especially when we refer to fire services.

We have said that we would give more authority to local government. In this case, I don't say we have followed what we have said all along. When it came down to the VLTs, Bill 75, have we consulted the local government? Have we gone to a referendum within the municipality? I think we bypassed the local municipality and we said: "Yes, we need some money for our coffers because we made some promises during the last campaign. We need 30%. We have to reach our goal of that tax scheme, the 30% tax cut. Why? Because we want to use some of that money to reimburse the high-salary people in this country." When I say high-salary people, I mean the high-revenue companies of this country.

I really have to say that there are good parts within this bill, but for the majority of them, we have gone way too far with it. We have gone ahead too soon with it. We haven't told the people what would be happening. We didn't instruct the municipality properly. At the present time they're just rushing to have these bylaws passed so we can meet the deadline, but we are going way too fast.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to add my comments to those of other members in this House, like the members for Welland-Thorold and Durham Centre, in response to

the member for Cochrane South. I must say, the member for Durham Centre accused the member for Cochrane South of making an ideological speech and yet he stood there and said that anything that's done in the public sector costs more, is less efficient, has more bureaucracy and it's always better if it's done in the private sector. If that's not ideological, I don't know what is.

**1850**

Let me say that the member for Cochrane South rightly pointed out that in Bill 86 there are many aspects which affect coordination of local transit services, transportation issues, that are very important for us to examine. I think it would do the members opposite well to take a look at some of those issues and, in particular, to understand the implication for workers who work in our municipal transit system. As in many other areas, whether you're dealing with firefighters, whether you're dealing with teachers, whether you're dealing with members of the direct public service, this government thinks it's okay simply to privatize, to move out jobs, and that the workers have no stake in those jobs.

Like taxpayers have a stake in the services that government provides, like private sector shareholders have a stake in their companies, workers have a stake in their jobs. They have, as we know, in the recent past in the public sector, increased their stake in their job security by taking lower wage increases or taking wage rollbacks.

To simply think it is okay to give the power for amalgamation without protection for workers' contracts, workers' seniority, for them to take the provision of their workplace contracts with them, for successor rights, in other words, successor rights that you've done away with through a number of measures, through the Labour Relations Act and through your Bill 26 measures with respect to public sector institutions that are not covered under the Labour Relations Act, shows time and time again your disrespect for workers, your disdain for working people, particularly in the public sector. This is an area of the bill that certainly should be amended.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Bisson:** To the member for Beaches-Woodbine, I agree with you entirely. I listened to the member for Durham Centre talk about how somehow I had an ideological point of view. Yes, I do, but so do you. You have an ideological point of view that's completely different from mine, and we're having a debate about that particular example. But to impute motive I think was a bit shortsighted on your part.

To the member for Welland-Thorold, thank you very much for the comments, as always, along with the member for Prescott and Russell.

Let me say directly to the government, if being ideological means to say that I'm in favour of public education, I guess I'm an ideologue; and if being ideological means to say I'm in favour of public health care, well damn it, I'm an ideologue again, and on and on with the services we have built within this province and this country with the blood, sweat and tears of the people in our communities to make sure that we are able to care for each other within our communities in a way that's



humanistic rather than only trying to do things from strictly a bottom-line perspective.

At times, yes, the private sector has a role to play when it comes to the delivery of services, but we need to recognize that the public sector services that we have put in place were put there for a reason. If government didn't get involved in transit authorities, quite frankly, we would not have transit authorities in many of the communities across Ontario.

The Mike Harris government is going to be cutting transit funding in the next two years to zero. It is going to result in the loss of service. There's just no two ways about it. Who is going to get hurt? It's not going to be Mr Palladini, it's not going to be Mr Leach with his \$10,000 Tory dog; it's going to be the people in our communities who are least able to defend themselves. That's who I'm speaking for on this particular bill. If being an ideologue means to say that I speak out in favour of them, I am proud to be an ideologue and I'm proud to call myself a New Democrat.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Hastings:** It's interesting to join in this debate regarding some major changes that this government is proposing with respect to Bill 86. The things that I want to speak to regarding the detailed changes in Bill 86 range all the way from changes in the composition and size of councils through Election Act changes through new provisions for campaign financing to the division of wards and the reduction of politicians, the subject of limited liability and the whole issue of debt restructuring.

It's interesting to listen to the mixed criticisms from the opposition benches trying to balance several balls at the same time. But I did hear from several of the speakers across the way that they believe there are positive changes being made in this legislation, in Bill 86; changes I counted up just recently, some 43 bills, 43 previous acts, things from the Conservation Authorities Act, the City of Timmins-Porcupine Act, the City of Thunder Bay Act, the Regional Municipalities Act, on and on.

What I want to focus on is what these detailed changes relate to and how they are going to affect the citizens of this province. For example, we are allowing municipalities and the councillors in these municipalities in Ontario to change the size and composition of councils. It was noted in previous debate about two weeks ago that this would be a rather odd thing to do, because you might allow municipal councils to increase their number. However, if the critics of the bill had looked at it more closely, there were specific provisions within Bill 86, particularly if you look at the section dealing with counties and upper-tier municipalities.

In order for the size of a council or the wards to be changed, that particular council had to pass a bylaw. At the end of 30 days, there are specific provisions. In order for the bylaw to go into effect, there had to be what is known as a triple majority. What we're referring to there in this particular section of the bill is that there had to be a majority of the votes on the county council cast in its favour; that was the first level of a triple majority. The second level involved the majority of the councils of all the municipalities that form part of the council for

municipal purposes agreeing with this provision. The third part of the triple majority was that the total number of electors in the local municipalities affected that had passed these resolutions also had to be a majority of the voters in that given county.

So here we have the first specific provision by which there are checks and balances in changes proposed for the reforms of the number of councillors or the size and composition of a given municipal council.

Furthermore, within other bills that are being amended in Bill 86, the public had a right to appeal this particular provision to the Ontario Municipal Board. In my estimation, this is a good change because it is consistent with what this government has been doing in terms of its own reduction of the number of politicians provincially, from 130 down to 103, through the Fewer Politicians Act. I think we're being very consistent in terms of giving greater flexibility to municipal governments to deal with this issue of how many representatives they want to have on a municipal council.

In a previous debate regarding this, it was noted that there was a great concern that by allowing councils to make these changes there was somehow an inherent conflict of interest and you were actually changing the very foundation of local representation. I would argue, on the other hand, that the way in which we are proposing to allow councils to change their composition and size, with the built-in checks and balances, is consistent with the philosophy of what people in the public want today. They do not want more politicians; they want fewer politicians. They want politicians who will be effective, and they want to see greater accountability in the way in which their tax dollars are spent. Hence, both the Fewer Politicians Act and the provision within this particular section of Bill 86 are consistent on that line. Furthermore, I would argue that this is simply an example of legislative and administrative simplification.

Another major reform that we are proposing in Bill 86 relates to the way in which the voter can register his or her vote. It has been noted in debate today that a lot of the speakers are concerned with respect to how people go to vote. The traditional way seems to be the best way, according to certain critics. On the other hand, it seems to me that if you have modern technology available, people who are disabled or are housebound for other reasons, people who are simply busy in a very busy lifestyle that most of are living today, ought to have the opportunity to participate in democracy through whatever means is available that is both legitimate and convenient. By that, I refer to the proposals in this particular section of Bill 86 that would allow the local elector to vote by phone or by the Internet or some combination.

**1900**

It has been mentioned that there is potential for voter fraud in this particular situation. We've already known that there is the potential for voter fraud in the traditional context of voting. We've recently had a case before the courts of Ontario involving a school board trustee who will probably be removed from office because this particular trustee had managed to persuade her daughter's boyfriend to register in only a partial degree of name, leaving out the surname. She won the election, but she



has now lost the court case and subsequently her position on that school board. So I think one can argue that you can have voter fraud in whatever way in which people go to vote.

The means of expanding the right to vote and to register a vote should not inhibit government from proceeding with new technological innovations to allow for greater voter participation. There are particular software modes available to block repeated-and-often types of voting, just as there are mechanical means already in place when one goes to the polls in the traditional sense of registering a vote at a poll. So I think this is a particularly good move in terms of advancing local government and getting greater participation in local government, because at the moment, over the history of the rate of voting in this province and in a large number of other jurisdictions throughout North America, we seem to end up with about a 30% to 40% rate of voter participation. It behooves me to understand why critics would not want to expand that rate of participation in a democracy if you can ensure there are adequate and comprehensive safeguards put in place regarding voter fraud, whether it be committed through the Internet or a touch-tone phone.

These particular means aren't by any means the only way that people can vote. If they still want to go out and vote in a physical sense, register their concerns at the polls, that's their particular choice. All we're doing is widening the type and range of choice that people have in order to vote.

One of the other things that I want to dwell on briefly is the way in which governments finance their debt. In the local government context, most municipalities have borrowed moneys for capital assets. They want to build infrastructure. They want to pay it down through a debt, and they borrow the debt. The rate of interest on which a particular debenture is issued is usually paid semi-annually. That has been the traditional way in which municipalities in this province have repaid their principal and debt. There is a specific provision within the debt and investment section of Bill 86 that will allow for variable rate interest to be set.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There is no quorum in the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you check for a quorum, please.

**Acting Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Acting Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Mr Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale.

**Mr Hastings:** As I was saying, the traditional way in which interest is calculated on a debenture for a capital asset that a municipality has the right to borrow under the Municipal Act has been on a semiannual basis, twice a year. That will change with the provision of allowing in this particular bill, Bill 86, to a new frequency. That frequency would be on a monthly basis and is very consistent with the new financial products that are being offered by the financial services sector of this country and this province, because a large number of people who are

taking early retirement or who have already retired are looking for ways in which they can be assured of a stable and certain income. I think that particular change modifies and recognizes the changes that are occurring in the styles of retirement in this particular province. So I think it's a good move on the part of the government to be consistent in this particular way because it is being modernistic and up to date in terms of the way municipalities borrow for their particular municipal infrastructure and capital assets.

Another subject that is placed within Bill 86 deals with limited liability. On this particular subject, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario for many years has been asking successive governments to make some changes in the way in which liability is dealt with at the municipal level. By this particular bill, we are recognizing and providing some degree of relief to those municipalities which are doing their best to deal with nuisance suits that end up in the courts. I think that particular provision will be helpful to local government.

On the subject of changes in campaign financing, we have made some new provisions there and laid out a very detailed and comprehensive strategy for ensuring that voters are clearly comfortable with the way in which financing of elections occurs at the local government level.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** You wouldn't have to do this if you didn't have the tax cut.

**Mr Hastings:** Isn't it interesting that the member opposite has to bring up the tax cut when in fact it has nothing whatsoever to do with the subject of campaign financing?

**Mr Bradley:** You are kidding.

**Mr Hastings:** "You're kidding." Well, I would say that the member for St Catharines certainly hasn't even read the bill probably, so he's not even sure as to whether in point of fact there is a relationship.

**Mr Bradley:** I'm going to read it.

**Mr Hastings:** Good. I hope the member will get educated at midnight tonight when he goes home and maybe he'll repent of his remark and feel sorry for himself and the rest of the House for that unsolicited comment.

I must say that some of the other changes that we have made and are proposed in Bill 86 deal in the whole area of red tape reduction. It may have been missed by members from the opposition benches, but I think it's significant to note that the required number of forms that are needed in a general local government election will be reduced from 40 to five. We'll shorten the period for the election by approximately 15 to 20 days.

We are going to require that people who are serious about a candidacy for a local government position, whether it be a school board, a local utility or a local council, focus on what particular choice they are going to make when the nomination process opens on the second day after the new year. Under the present provisions you can do a little bottom-fishing. You can put your name in for school trustee; you can decide: "Well, maybe I want to be a local councillor. No, maybe I want to be on a utilities commission." It seems to be eeny, meeny, miney, mo, and they can't make up their minds until the last few



days before the actual nomination process concludes, and suddenly they aren't prepared to decide, except with the flip of a coin perhaps, what is the particular position they favour. I think this minor provision and change in Bill 86 will focus the mind wondrously in terms of getting people to be more committed, focused and targeted on what specific position they are going to go to the voters on, and it will demonstrate a greater and serious commitment to that position.

1910

There are a couple of other things I wanted to add as general concluding comments that seem to have eluded members of the opposition. But I think it would be interesting for the people of this province to know that who is qualified to vote is still going to be maintained in this bill. That is, anybody who is serving a sentence in a correctional institution or a jail is disqualified from voting, quite unlike, I believe, the changes that were made in the federal elections machinery that allow people who have committed a serious crime to participate democratically in voting in this country. I think it's a fundamental contrast and I think it is consistent and in context with keeping an integrity in campaign financing in the local government context.

May I conclude by saying that there are some other minor technical changes in this legislation dealing with the debt restructuring, limited liability, which is a very, very complex subject in terms of insurance coverage for municipalities, and in terms of the details of the comprehensive campaign financing.

I simply want to add that this particular bill is being presented at this time for changes that will follow in other legislation, I surmise, during the 1997 session and leading up to the municipal elections in this province for next year.

Finally, I would like to say that the changes are consistent with the following philosophy: reducing the number of local politicians at both the provincial and local government context; simplifying municipal election procedures; reducing red tape where possible; getting the most benefit for taxpayers when they borrow and spend and invest; better management of liability risks, particularly of the nuisance variety; and removing potential barriers to community transportation initiatives. I think all in all these particular proposed changes in Bill 86 add up to what I would consider a good name for this legislation, the Better Local Government Act.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Bradley:** I always enjoy listening to the member from Rexdale because he has some interesting things to say on the legislation. He does his job of defending of government policy well, but, I must give him credit, not to the extent that it reads as though it came from the Premier's office itself. I like the way he puts some of his own thoughts into these matters, and I want to give him credit. I always like having him in the House to be able to interject and keep people on their toes as well, even though interjections are out of order.

But I can't find myself entirely in agreement with him. He contended during his speech and in answer to an interjection that this has nothing to do with the tax cut. I always manage to actually relate it to the tax cut because

a lot of the measures they're embarking upon that are designed to reduce government expenditures are as a result of the fact that the government is involved in what we call a risky and unwise tax scheme, one which will give a 30% cut in provincial income taxes, which will benefit the richest people the most. For instance, bank presidents will be applauding and corporate giants will be applauding this because they will be getting the best out of it. What is the government going to have to do if that means it has to cut in other areas? It's going to borrow the money: \$5 billion a year will be borrowed, even though we have a deficit already, to finance the tax cut.

Mr Speaker, you're often in the chair and you wonder how I relate these matters to the tax cut. That's how it happens. The cuts, the corners that are cut by the government, are because they have to cut far more from their various programs and projects than the backbenchers ever anticipated. Some of them did and were outspoken on it, but I don't have time to list them this evening. They're probably just as happy.

**Ms Lankin:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale. In his wrapup he talked about the principles in the bill and he talked about fewer politicians. I just want to focus on that for a moment because in fact it's one of the reasons we think much of what's in this bill should be included in the larger bill that's coming forward that will be dealing with municipal restructuring. In particular, I want to point out that this government has zeroed in on Metro Toronto and believes that Metro Toronto needs fewer politicians between the regional and the cities. I see a lot of Tory heads nodding up and down.

I just want to point out to you that if you look at North York, the ratio is one politician to 39,000. If you look at Toronto, it's 1 to 37; Scarborough, 1 to 36; and in the smallest, East York, it's 1 to 12. There is a big difference there, but of course it's because of the small size of the city. But I point out to you that in the GTA belt, the GTA region that you refuse to touch — let's talk about York or Peel or Halton or Durham, let's just take a look at some of the numbers.

York region, one of the highest ratios there, is 1 to 16,000; in Markham, 1 to 12; in Richmond Hill, 1 to 10; but then we go Newmarket, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, and we're down to 1 to 4 or 1 to 3.9 or 1 to 3. What about in Peel? Mississauga is high at 1 to 53, but Brampton is 1 to 14; Caledon is 1 to 4.

Let's look at Halton: Oakville, 1 to 9,800; Burlington, 1 to 8,000; Halton, 1 to 3,200; Milton, 1 to 3,000; Durham, the same thing, average of 1 to 9,000, 1 to 8,000; or Scugog is 1 to 3,000; Uxbridge, 1 to 2,400. Yet the Tory government has focused all of its energy on fewer politicians in Metro Toronto and the cities within the area of Metro Toronto. They somehow think that's the area that needs to be fixed. Why don't they touch the GTA belt? Because the political base of Tory support is there. If you're going to have forced amalgamation in Toronto, force it in the rest of the GTA region as well.

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I just want to commend the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale for his fine rendition of the Better Local Government Act. I want to point out that it is the Better Local Government Act and



it deals with local government, and I think it might be appropriate to read into the record some of the comments of those people who are involved with local government.

October 23 in the Cambridge Times: "The act will cut out much of the red tape in the administration of elections, for example, which will help simplify the process, and it will also allow us to change the size and composition of council if we wish without approval from the Ontario Municipal Board," said Smith." This was Don Smith, the CAO for Cambridge.

In the Northern Daily News: "A lot of this is good and we have been asking for these changes and provincial government is responding to local needs. They want the bureaucracy cut and they are doing it." That's the mayor of Kirkland Lake, Joe Mavrinac.

Not to be outdone, from the Sentinel-Review in Oxford county: "Oxford county warden Ed Down is pleased with the moves. 'It gives a lot more responsibility to municipalities and lessens the paperwork and red tape municipalities have to go through.' 'It's good to have local decisions made at the local level.'"

Again, I would like to thank the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale for his fine rendition of the bill.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** There are some provisions in this bill which I think are positive and which will be helpful to local municipalities. There are some provisions of the bill with which I have concern, and one in particular. I feel that the bill does not address the issue in a comprehensive way and I'd like to put forward a suggestion to the government.

We've had a bill already which has changed the provincial boundaries so that they are the same as the federal boundaries. This piece of legislation that is before us, Bill 86, actually says that municipalities are no longer required to do an enumeration at every municipal election. For the information of members of the government, it would actually save the province some \$16 million if they were to adopt the same voters list as the federal government voters list. If you are eliminating the need for municipal enumeration at every municipal election, I believe that if there were one voters list in Ontario, that would make a lot of sense and would be the sensible thing to do, yet we don't see that as part of the government's plan and proposal.

1920

This bill could be amended, if the government wanted to, to say that the municipal voters list is the same as the federal voters list. Then you could include the provincial one and you would eliminate the need for continuous enumeration. Costs could be shared between the province and the federal government. It could be an electronic voters list. I think it's important that those new technologies are available to keep voters lists up to date and make sure that nobody gets left off. I've spoken with the chief returning officer, and as long as people could get on the voters list, if they moved or showed up even on election day, as they did during a recent by-election, I think that idea is something the government could amend and include in this bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Hastings:** I'd simply like to thank the member for Oriole for her positive proposal. Perhaps the government will look at it in its widest context.

I'm somewhat disappointed by the remarks of the members opposite in terms of not even focusing in on what are the defects of the bill on a specific basis. For example, the member for St Catharines, in his usual litany, goes back to the tax reduction. I guess he taught school for a while. I don't know if he got into the complexities of history, but usually history has a continuity to it, and in that context I think he was part of history in terms of the previous government that ran up a pretty fat spending bill and bigger government agenda, if my memory serves me correctly. So it's passing strange that the member for St Catharines always has to link back to the so-called tax cut and that everything we're doing revolves around that. Perhaps he should rejig his thinking and say it revolves around the past accumulated debt this particular government was left with and that we're trying to reduce that debt.

Even members of AMO and members of municipalities who are not members of AMO have said time and again: "Give us some of the tools for us to get on with what needs to be done and we will do it. We understand that we have a task facing us and we would be appreciative if you'd give us some tools with which we could carry out that task." That's what the Better Local Government Act has.

**Mr Lalonde:** I appreciate having the opportunity to speak on Bill 86.

Le gouvernement a manqué de leadership dans ce dossier. Les municipalités ont reçu très peu de direction et certaines municipalités sont complètement délaissées. Exclues des négociations, d'autres ne veulent pas s'amalgamer sans savoir si la province imposera une fusion plus tard. Il y a eu des tiraillements entre les élus des différentes municipalités. Il y a beaucoup d'insécurité pour les employés municipaux. Dans les régions rurales comme Prescott et Russell les gens devront franchir de longues distances pour obtenir ces services, tels que les centres communautaires.

In Ontario we have, I believe, 833 municipalities, excluding regional government, for a population of 11.2 million. In Quebec we have 1,433 municipalities for a population of 7.3 million. I'm not saying they have too many municipalities in Quebec; they are the ones who should know and who should take the proper steps. But here in Ontario, especially in Prescott and Russell, there are 19 municipalities for a population of 126,000. We have municipal councils that are formed by between five and nine members.

This government is very strong on toolboxes. We just have to remember what happened to the Ministry of Education when the ministry transferred toolboxes to school boards. The local school board found out that the toolboxes were empty. This time we are in the process of transferring toolboxes to municipalities, but this time the toolbox is not empty; it has a little note inside. It says, "Municipalities, now you will have to collect money from the vulnerable people."

What I mean by this is we will go ahead with user fees. Remember one thing: Roads are built for everyone,



but at times there are people who use those roads very little, but we need the roads to go to hospital, we need the roads to go to church, we need the roads to do our shopping.

We are talking about the possibility of transferring the responsibility of ambulances to municipalities. Very few people use ambulances, but when the time comes, we need those ambulances in place. Who is going to pay for those ambulances? The taxpayers of the local municipalities.

We are talking of charging for people going to the library. We say in French, «Une ville sans bibliothèque est une ville morte, une ville qui s'en va vers un profond sommeil.» A municipality without a library is a dead town to me. It's very important that all taxpayers are paying for this library.

Just lately, we were told that all police services will be transferred to municipalities. Municipalities will have to pay for those police services. We are told it might come up to about \$380 per household a year. I'm even told it's going to be higher than that. Well, where are we going to take the money to pay for those police services? From the local taxpayers.

It's true. The government is thinking of taking over up to 95% of the education costs but, in turn, they will reduce the transfer to the municipality, they will reduce the unconditional grant, they will reduce the MTO subsidies to municipalities.

We are told that anyone who is in the hospital after surgery, when the doctor says, "It's time for you to go home," if that person hasn't got anybody to help them at home, the person has no choice but to stay in the hospital. But what is going to happen to that person or to the family who has to pay for that hospital? There will be an additional cost of \$40 a day for that person who will be staying in the hospital. Why are we doing all this? It's just to meet the tax scheme this government came with.

Mind you, I'm not against everything in that bill. There are definitely some good portions of the bill that we should seriously consider. Talking of cuts, the government has guaranteed a 30% tax cut to the well-off. The home care service is reduced at this time and will be reduced further. Again, when those people are coming out of the hospital, they go home. Are we going to be able to keep that home care service that we have? I have some doubt.

1930

A lot of municipalities have no choice right now. They have to have a user fee for garbage pickup. Again, it is just to meet some of the promises we made during the campaign.

When I said that we have 19 municipalities in Prescott and Russell, of which one major municipality is Cumberland township, with a population of 46,000, it is part of the Ottawa-Carleton regional government. They have some additional services that other rural municipalities don't have, but they too are going to be hit very hard. If I'm looking at Highway 17 and Highway 34, will the government be transferring the maintenance or the construction of those highways to the municipality? I really believe so.

Just lately I've heard one of the wardens saying at one of the meetings or at one of the banquets, "The best thing that could happen was Bill 26. Now we have the power," but the warden who said that never realized that this government was going to transfer every little cost that has to be spent in the municipality to the local municipality.

To come back to the ambulance service, I just don't know how this government is going to handle this. Really, not too many small municipalities will be able to afford it, but still the government is thinking of transferring the responsibility of ambulances to small municipalities. Transferring county roads from the county responsibility to the local municipalities; again, that would be additional costs. I was talking to one small municipality; 82% of its budget goes towards the roads. Will they be able to afford this? I don't think so.

But one of the points we are talking about very lately, and I'm sure there'll be a lot of Hydro people watching this on television, is that the municipalities will have the chance, will have the power to take over Hydro. Do we have the competent people at the municipal level to run Hydro? This will be decided by themselves.

We've always said that we want to leave the management to the municipalities, but we still dictate to local government very often. Just lately, in this release we got last week on lot levies, we didn't say we were going to leave that to local government. We dictate to local government by saying, "From now on you cannot use 100% of the lot levies plus having the subdividers build their own roads at 100% of the cost, to build a water system, to build a sewer system." No, we are going to dictate to local government, the municipality, by saying, "From now on you will be paying 10% of any road construction, 10% of the water construction and the sanitary sewer construction."

**Mr Murdoch:** What do you think of that deal?

**Mr Lalonde:** I really think it is a steal.

Thirty per cent of the cost for a new library, new community centres, new city hall, parks and recreation, day care: how do you think the municipalities are going to be able to afford this?

**Mr Bradley:** They won't.

**Mr Lalonde:** Certainly they won't. But there's a little note at the bottom. It will be left to the municipality to borrow the money. Who will be paying to borrow that money? All the local taxpayers only. This is a real scheme. It's robbery.

There's a good part in that lot levy, though, with which I agree, but only if the municipality can afford it and only if the services are in place to service that sector. It's the elimination of 50% of the "agrandissement" or the expansion of the industry sector. It might create jobs. It will boost up the assessment for the municipality, but that is the only good part of that new announcement.

**Mr Murdoch:** What did Hazel say about that?

**Mr Bradley:** Hazel?

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. The members for St Catharines and Grey-Owen Sound, come to order, please.

**Mr Lalonde:** We kept on saying that it will reduce the cost of having, let's say, four municipal councils, that we want to reduce to one. Do you think we are crazy? You say that it will reduce the cost multiplied by four? Do



you think the members of council will work at \$2,000 a year or the reeve will work at \$7,000 a year? He will have to become a full-time reeve, a full-time mayor, plus he will have to have a secretary or an assistant to work with him, and an office. That will create additional costs to local government.

We were supposed to have a bill passed that I'm told — I don't know. I've been asking the question, how is the ward system going to work? I only know of a few municipalities that have agreed, that have passed a bill or bylaw already to decide on a ward system. What is going to happen to the others that didn't pass the bylaw for the ward system? My recommendation to the government is to extend the actual mandate of local government, local municipalities, by a year. This would give a chance to this government to inform properly the municipalities of what the impact will be after the amalgamation of all those municipalities. It would be easy to do. All the government has to do — you have the number of people to pass it — is pass a bill extending by one year so you would be in a position to inform properly all the municipalities.

I was told — I heard it right here in this House — that many elected members spend an awful lot of money by going to fund-raisers, giving money to charitable groups. Do you think municipal councillors will continue going to every activity? If I'm looking at one municipality within my own riding which will be amalgamated, Clarence township and Rockland, it will come down to probably approximately seven or eight hamlets within the municipality. There are three or four community centres. The ones that don't have the community centre within their boundaries, will they be paying the same tax bill as the others that have the community centres? There will be a great fight for that one.

I remember when the Premier announced that there was a program of \$8 million for the lunch box. When I say "lunch box," it would give a chance to the needy people who don't have a chance to have a breakfast in the morning to have a breakfast when they get to school. At that time we came out with this, we definitely insulted the women of this province. We said, "For those women who cannot feed their children before they go to school, we will have this program in place." Gentlemen, I don't think we made a good move there.

I was approached just lately by the farming community, the dairy farmers especially. They told me it is the end of any dairy farmers in this province to be elected to municipal council. I believed it when they said that, because they are going to go probably a distance of 30, 40, 50 miles or even 100 kilometres to get to the council meeting. There will not be a local voice any more within the community to respond to the needs of those people who at times require the additional services.

I remember why the election was pushed to November every three years. It's because we wanted to give a chance to the dairy farmers to participate at the election. Today we're talking about having the election back in October. This will mean we don't consider the dairy farmer, which is the second-largest industry in our province. We just forgot about them.

## 1940

Just lately also, we received a statement that it is now going to be left to the community to decide on where construction or residential development will occur. We talked about giving the right to the farmers to farm, but in this case it was right in that memo. We said that the municipalities will decide if they want to go ahead with development within a farming community or within the dairy farmers. Again, I don't think this is fair.

In my own riding of Prescott-Russell, excluding Cumberland township, because it comes with the regional government, over two years we are going to lose in unconditional grants and MTO grants close to \$2.2 million. That is only 47%. This government keeps saying, "We will take over \$4 billion to \$4.5 billion in education but we will cut \$4 billion to \$4.5 billion in transfer money to municipalities."

Lately I was in North Bay, right in the backyard of our Premier. We kept on saying all the time that we wanted to give a break to small business people. First of all, we eliminated the Ontario health tax to the small employer. We have frozen the WCB. We said that we would freeze hydro, but we forget to tell them that we would increase the municipal tax. Why do I say we have to increase municipal tax? It's because we have to charge the municipal business sector the full cost of the operation. In North Bay alone, in two and a half blocks, 22 stores were closed. In Pembroke, in one block, seven stores were closed. If I go to Hawkesbury, to Cornwall, it is a real bad position in the business area.

I don't think this was the right approach, to say, "We are going to cut down the Ontario health tax." The business people have agreed to it but they haven't seen the 1998 municipal tax bill yet. I'm not saying 1997, I'm saying 1998, because this is going to happen after the next municipal election. You will see the municipal taxes skyrocketing.

There is one municipality in my own riding at the present time — not only one, but there are a few that have not decided to amalgamate. If I were in the shoes of the reeve of the municipality of Russell, I would think twice before going to amalgamation. It is up to them as long as they do a proper study. It might pay to join another municipality, but a small municipality, with the territory it is covering, and also having a 13,000 population, I would think twice. Once again, there was no proper study done by this government.

We have said we would give more power to the municipalities. Have we approached the municipalities for the VLTs? Have we asked the municipalities if they were in favour of Bill 75? I don't think so. We completely forgot them once again. We only say that we are giving power to the municipalities, but when we want to have control of the money, we take over. This is the government.

There was only one government in the last 20 years, I would say, that really knew how to operate properly or to administer a budget: The Liberal government finished in 1990 with a \$90,000 surplus. We didn't have to go to all those cuts that we are doing. We never promised the people of this province that we would reduce their personal income tax by 30%.



I've done a study to find out how much the people in my riding will benefit from that 30% tax cut. I took the average revenue of the ladies living in the Osprey area. They will benefit by \$1.25 a week. But I went a little further, looking at how much it would cost to send their kids to play hockey, how much it would cost to send their kids to the swimming pool, how much it would cost to go to the library, and I end up by having minus \$14.69 instead of having a tax break. This is the type of tax break this government is talking about: an increase in fees and a tax break of \$1.25 a week versus the \$14.69 a week more that these people will have to pay.

By amalgamation, we will eliminate a lot of volunteer-operated boards. I'm sure of that, because when you hire in a small rural area or a small rural municipality, everybody knows each other, but when you start dealing with other municipalities that are as far as 50 kilometres farther, there's no way you're going to get the same volunteer support.

In Ontario, in 1953, we had a total of 924 municipalities. Today we have 833 and we are talking about reducing the number of municipalities by probably 400.

I will end my brief on this note: I just hope this government will do a deep study of what the impact will be of forcing municipalities to amalgamate under Bill 86.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I will take a couple of minutes here to comment before I come back and take the chair and be, of course, totally neutral again for a little while, as we all are when we get in the chair.

Now as I stand in my place here, I would like to tell the member for Prescott-Russell that I listened with great interest to his comments because he represents a different constituency than I do in Metro Toronto. I found some of his points very interesting in terms of, for instance, farmers feeling that they won't be able to participate in local democracy again.

I think that is part of the whole theme we're seeing throughout this bill and other bills that are coming from the Tory Harris government. For a government that claims to want to put more power back into the communities and have less government, it's doing just the opposite. In all of its so-called reforms what it is doing in fact is creating larger, more complex bureaucracies and taking more and more power away from local municipalities and from communities, and unfortunately that's what we are seeing in this bill.

I find it also quite interesting that while this bill is going through, we have a process that's going on which we're all referring to now as the who does what to whom process, which is happening in secret, behind closed doors. I know in my riding, on the education finance subcommittee of the who does what to whom, the parents, the teachers, everybody was shut right out of that process. Then when the parents hired a lawyer to try to fight back and perhaps cause an injunction, the minister's office phoned and shut that process down. That's the kind of thing that's going on here.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I want to compliment the member for Prescott-Russell for his fine remarks, as usual, and certainly I want to have the opportunity to make some comments myself, if I can, just

in terms of municipalities and the realities they're facing, particularly those in northern Ontario.

We know that municipalities are certainly under a great deal of pressure these days while they wait for the further axe to fall in terms of transfer payments and have to deal with the fact that the finance minister last week obviously embarrassed himself and embarrassed the government by not making the commitment he said he would in letting the municipalities know what the reality was going to be in terms of further transfer payment cuts.

I know that in northern Ontario there are a number of things that have got people very, very concerned. One of them that is just coming to the forefront is the fact that Ministry of Natural Resources and the minister himself are putting forward the possibility and the likelihood that municipalities will now also have to take some responsibility for fighting forest fires. We know what the costs of fighting forest fires is in the province — last year it was somewhere in the area of \$100 million — and we also know that the bulk of these forest fires take place in northern Ontario.

I know the municipal mayors and reeves that I've spoken to are very concerned, and certainly I want to ask the Minister of Natural Resources to be very upfront and open about it, because that is simply something they cannot afford. Here they are waiting to find out what the further transfer payment cuts will be and they're being told through leaked documents and through various studies that are being done that they may now have to pay a certain portion to fight forest fires when we know full well this is the full responsibility of the provincial government. It's something that I want to put on notice to the minister, that we expect some response for that and, quite frankly, to maintain the responsibilities they presently have.

**1950**

**Mr Kormos:** I've listened again to the member for Prescott and Russell and I appreciated and enjoyed and understood most of his analysis. He, however, brought to our attention again the surplus.

**Ms Churley:** What surplus?

**Mr Kormos:** The surplus in 1990. We in this caucus remember that Liberal surplus well.

**Ms Churley:** How many hours did that last?

**Mr Kormos:** It was a surplus that existed for around 15 minutes and descended, descended into a deficit that was of enormous proportions. I appreciate that the Liberals campaigned on that surplus, but during the course of that election campaign in 1990 that surplus dwindled as readily as their support did in the popularity polls.

There was no surplus in 1990, and the fact is that the last government inherited a deficit that it responded to with a sense of long-term economic planning and with a sense of compassion for the people who are going to be hurt most in recessionary times, in times of high unemployment. It didn't take the easy route of saying, "Well, fine, we'll reduce the number of people on welfare by putting them out on the street and by putting them into hostels and by putting them into cardboard shipping crates in the back alleys off Yonge Street." That's how this government has responded to a crisis of unemploy-



ment. That's how this government has responded to a crisis of growing poverty in this province, including child poverty, where one in three children in the city of Toronto relies on social assistance for their sustenance. It's those one in three children that this government put under direct attack when it reduced their support amounts to the tune of 22%. That's what this government did.

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I can't sit quiet any longer. I must make a comment of what's going on in this House. I would like to make one suggestion to some of the members: that they read this bill. It might enlighten them on really what we're talking about.

I hear the member for Riverdale saying that we are taking everything away from the municipalities. That is not true. What we are doing is giving them the authority they have wanted for a lot of years. As a municipal councillor for 13 years, we kept constantly saying: "Please, provincial government, get out of our pockets. Let us do it ourselves. We know what we want in our municipalities; let us do it with the help of the people in those municipalities."

What we have done on this particular legislation is we are asking municipalities to do what we've done: reduce officials, reduce politicians. There is no reason in the world it can't be done. In the municipalities that I represented back for a couple or three years as warden, we had 109 politicians for approximately 120,000 people. I used to do a speech when I was warden suggesting that there were 24,000 politicians in Canada. I believe that's just a touch overgoverned, and I believe that if we want to show the people of this province responsibility, efficiency, accountability, less duplication and reduced costs, which is what this bill talks about, then this is a good bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Prescott-Russell has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Lalonde:** A lot of points have been touched on. My friend from Port Arthur said really, yes, it's true there was a reduction in the forest fire operation. In my own county, Larose forest, which is the second-largest manmade forest in the world, has been given back to the municipality and the municipality will have no money to operate it. It would mean that we will close it. I don't know what's going to happen if there's ever a fire in the Larose forest.

But talking to my friend — I forget which area he's from —

**Mr Gravelle:** Peterborough.

**Mr Lalonde:** He's from Peterborough. I really believe within his area they need a restructuring. Having 109 politicians for 120,000 population, he did need to restructure, but in our area we knew how to operate our own municipality. I was on municipal council for 25 years and I could tell you that at times we would say, "If only the government would let us run our own municipality." But only at times, not all the time.

Today we are transferring everything that we think we could let them control. But the things that the government wants to keep the control on, they don't approach the municipality. They make the decision on their own. This is my answer to some of the points that were brought up.

But don't forget: The farming community has to be important within the municipality. A farming community is part of a municipality; it's part of a local community. If we eliminate the chance of all the dairy farmers to be part of a local council, we are in deep trouble.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Welland-Thorold.

**Ms Churley:** Jim was all ready to go.

**Mr Kormos:** I didn't want to cut Mr Bradley's grass, but he's been up till way past midnight for the last few days anyway. His body clock is tuned into it now. He figures it's just breakfast time. He figures it's time for the first ballot; after all, it is 8 in the evening.

Here we are. This is only but the second day of debating Bill 86, and one of the interesting observations is that this is so reminiscent in so many ways of Bill 26 — well, the same minister, and I'll speak about that in just a few minutes, but also a bill that is very much omnibus in character because what it does is address several areas that are of interest and concern to municipalities but it does it in such a way that they deserve to be spoken to as separate bills and debated each separate from the other.

It's a bill of some 153 pages. I've got a feeling that very few municipal councillors across Ontario have had a chance to obtain a copy of this yet or indeed to read it, and I have read it. The problem is I've read it once, and then I listened to some of the debate, and I went through it again trying to put various clauses and sections and subsections in the context of what people had talked about during the course of debate. It's something I'm convinced is of great interest to a large number of municipal councillors and other municipal-level politicians.

This is the first of two weeks of midnight sittings, so here we are at 8 o'clock on Monday night, December 2. Many people are watching the legislative channel at this point and they're suspecting this is a rerun. I can understand why they would be suspicious that it is a rerun, because oftentimes the sort of dialogue that's engaged in becomes somewhat repetitious.

**2000**

I have no idea what the Queen's Printer is charging for a copy of Bill 86, but I would urge people to write to the Minister of Municipal Affairs at Queen's Park and insist on their own copy of the bill: not a Xeroxed copy, not one that's been passed around and is dog-eared and marked up as it has passed through many hands or that's been highlighted in that way that students often do. You ever buy a used textbook and it's been owned by a student who has a highlighter obsession, and what's remarkable are only the pieces that aren't coloured pink or yellow or green, whatever the particular predilection is? So I would really urge people — it's their right. It's a bill that probably if you were to buy it at the Queen's Printer costs \$8, \$9, \$10, but I think Al Leach ought to be giving one free to anybody who writes in to Al Leach, Minister of Municipal Affairs at Queen's Park in Toronto. I think they should start writing and faxing as quickly as possible, because it's important. It does a whole lot of things.



I recall the minister's sponsorship of Bill 26. I'm sure he recalls it too. I'm sure it dwells in his mind —

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Like a bad dream.

**Mr Kormos:** That's right. It dwells in his mind like a juvenile nightmare. I'm sure the minister recalls Bill 26: the questioning in the House, the scrumming outside in the hallways, and more so the public hearings. I'm sure he recalls them with some fear and anxiety — nothing that medication wouldn't resolve, I suppose, if properly administered, but with a trepidation and a regret that is probably close to unequalled in his lifetime.

I don't know the minister. I knew the minister was the head of the Toronto Transit Commission. I had read that in the paper. I presume that gave him some or spoke of some administrative skill, so I was quite interested in meeting him. Of course, he'd been elected with the rest of those Tories back in the summer of 1995. So I was fascinated by the piece in the *Star* yesterday, one of these human interest fluff pieces that usually end up in the *Sunday paper*. Those are the canned papers, the ones that are pre-written because the papers prepare a lot of editorial copy and use it as filler. I was fascinated by the photograph. The minister lives in a beautiful home. It was something out of *Architectural Digest*. There were little gold — what do they call them? — cherubs, little cherub things, sitting on the mantel. The carpet was described — and also the visuals were incredible, but we're talking thick white carpet, the sort of carpet that if that Lhasa apso had indeed tossed those Tic Tacs it swallowed, all hell would have broken loose in the Leach household because you don't do that to white carpet.

But I was interested in the article because of the fact that Lisa Wright is a top-notch reporter. I was interested in the types of insights she could give us into the minister who gave us Bill 26. Now we have Bill 86 from the same man who brought you Bill 26. This is like a movie scripted by Joe Esterhasz, and you know the sort of stuff he produces. It's not the sort of stuff that has long run times even in the video stores.

So you've got a minister who knows Arnie Palmer. He knows a very famous golfer and he knows a not-so-famous golfer. He has two golfers in his life, one far more famous than the other. And he has a dog, a very expensive dog. The man suffers from anthropomorphism. You know what I mean, don't you, Speaker? Again I understand that's something that's very North American, but it's also something that's very Rosedale. All I know is that I'm sad that Charlie the beagle is dead, because Charlie the beagle didn't cost anything near what Tory the Lhasa apso cost, but I'd put Charlie the beagle, God bless his dead soul, against that Lhasa apso any day, I tell you, and Charlie the beagle was no Tory.

One of the interesting things about the bill is that we're talking about a variety of areas that it affects in municipalities. One of the things that's been talked about, and I've had the chance to respond to several, is the fact that even some of my own colleagues have had an approach to the bill that is, as I've said, more benign than mine is. Some of my own colleagues have been inclined to suggest, "Well, maybe that's not such a bad idea."

One of the areas that's been responded to positively has been the matter of how you vote, of the fact that you don't have to, according to the bill, be municipalities with designed voting regimes whereby you don't have to go from 10 in the morning until 8 pm, although the municipality — quite frankly, this part I don't have a quarrel with: voting hours of 10 am to 8 pm with the municipality having the power to bring, I presume, only the beginning hours down to an earlier time range. Fine; so be it.

But then there's the hoopla of high-tech voting, of using the Internet or using telephones, using some sort of electronics to vote. Unfortunately, I'm a little sceptical about high-tech voting for a couple of reasons that I'm going to speak to. This government's experience with high-tech anything — to wit, the high technology up at the family support plan in Downsview — has not proven itself to be very successful. Their high technology up in Downsview, which they're purporting to import through Bill 86, consisted of a bunch of dusty cardboard boxes, and some of them will have the initials PK and SM written in the dust on those cardboard boxes in fingerprints.

We've witnessed voting machines, and I know a whole lot of municipalities that have purchased electronic voting equipment. Most of it doesn't work particularly well.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** The Liberals could have used it on Saturday.

**Mr Kormos:** Yes, tell me about it. The high technology that this government is contemplating is probably exactly what the Liberals were using over at Maple Leaf Gardens on Saturday from, what was it, 1 in the afternoon until 4:30 in the morning, the same sort of high technology that attracted the attention of all the Canadian TV networks such that their broadcasters were glued to the events at Maple Leaf Gardens.

But I should tell you that I'm concerned about several things. I'm concerned about the élitism inherent in suggesting that people use their home computers to vote. We've got a whole lot of people who simply don't have home computers, who don't have access to them. There's been discussion that, "People don't turn out to municipal elections." Is the reason people don't turn out to municipal elections because it's all that much more bothersome to attend a voting area and cast a ballot or is it because they've become more and more detached from what their municipal councillors are doing?

I've got to confess something to you. I used to be a municipal councillor, and that was back from 1985 to 1988. Of the people who elected me to Queen's Park in 1988, some suggested it was to get me out of city hall. Others suggested that it was perhaps some sort of accident. One of the things I share with most other people who have been in municipal government is that in municipal government we had a far closer role in terms of this decision-making that was taking place. As municipal councillors, especially in a small town — I shouldn't call Welland a small town; it's a smaller community in the province — like a whole lot of the other people here who were in similar-sized municipal councils, we had an opportunity to address issues, to get things resolved, to get things done in a far more direct way than you can at



Queen's Park, regardless of where you're sitting in any of these benches.

Some of us on municipal council felt that type of active hands-on involvement was a very valuable way for politicians to address the affairs of their constituents. It's one of the concerns I have about Bill 86; that is, that there seems to be very much here a repetition of this government's desire to, in its language, reduce the number of politicians, but in reality that amounts to reducing the amount of government — to wit, the amount of democratic representation — that voters, ratepayers, citizens have at any one of any number of levels of government.

2010

I tell you that people down in Welland-Thorold are eager to see their governments work for them, not to see their governments eradicated. The people in Welland-Thorold are eager to have the opportunity to vote for elected politicians who they hope will reflect and represent and articulate their views, be it at city councils in Welland or Thorold, at the regional municipality of Niagara or at Queen's Park or at Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

I don't accept the proposition that there has to be an introduction of high-tech voting to reinforce the participation of voters in municipal elections. Rather I suggest to you that it's the quality of politicians and the commitment of politicians who run for those offices, whose job it is to persuade people that they have a reason to want to vote in that municipal election. That's where this bill erodes the role of municipal governments and detracts from that responsibility that municipal politicians have to their electorate.

This government, and in a way that's reminiscent very much of Bill 26, wants to give the provincial government and the minister powers to do certain things that were within the realm of municipal governments, specifically with respect to the area of public transportation. I don't think the people where I come from are eager to see that put into effect, and I'm telling you that the debate we've heard over the issue so far has convinced me that this bill should be defeated for that reason alone.

Look, all we can do is highlight some of the areas that have generated concern. There's some talk about how wonderful it is that undischarged bankrupts will now be able to run for municipal office. I suppose on the one hand we're witnessing unprecedented levels of bankruptcy here in the province of Ontario — there seems to be no abatement in that regard — and the argument is: "That's true democracy. Just because a person's gone into bankruptcy, why should that person be precluded from serving on a municipal council or running for office?"

I happen to have spent a little bit of time in bankruptcy court, about a month and half ago. I watched the people who were petitioning the bankruptcy court for their bankruptcies. There were entrepreneurs there for whom a bankruptcy was a genuine tragedy, small business people whose bankruptcies could be attributed to the economic conditions, to bad business advice, to bad financial planning. There were business bankruptcies, corporate receivership types of bankruptcies.

I understand that a white paper has been tabled in Ottawa talking about reform of the bankruptcy laws. At the same time, there were any number of people in that bankruptcy court who had no business being there. There were people who were bankrupts, and I'm sure they were because of the definition of bankruptcy, who were relatively young, who were quite capable, but who in my view, sitting there as a spectator in the bankruptcy court for a full day — it was the first opportunity I'd ever had to do that — when I saw the list of creditors —

Let me tell you why I was there: I've got a constituent, a young woman whose former common-law partner had bilked her to the tune of around \$3,500. She obtained judgement against this person in Small Claims Court, properly so. This person, at the age of around 34 years old, physically able, fit, declared bankruptcy with accumulated debts of around \$10,000, \$11,000 or \$12,000. I was there on behalf of that constituent to tell the bankruptcy court that this is absurd, that my constituent is a victim of a predator who had ripped her off and no way should this bankruptcy court allow this person to be discharged from bankruptcy before he had exhausted all of his capacity to pay off his debt, especially to my constituent — a victim, a little person.

I don't think that an undischarged bankrupt who's in that position, who may well have bilked any number of small business people, who may well have bilked any number of innocent victims, I don't believe that an undischarged bankrupt in terms of the existing nature of the bankruptcy laws should be allowed to participate as a candidate in a municipal election.

Mr O'Toole — and I know I'm not supposed to refer to him by name, am I, Speaker? — but, Mr O'Toole, you know who I'm speaking of. As a matter of fact, it was Mr Wildman, who is the member for Algoma, who raised the issue while Mr O'Toole was addressing the assembly. Mr O'Toole praised — I'm now in the area of victims — the statutory controls on liability of a municipality. You'll recall that he did that. He praised the fact that municipalities will be less and less liable to property owners as this bill progresses and gets passed into law. He talked about how little people are going to suffer from the negligence or wrongdoing of municipalities and how municipalities are going to be protected by this government from doing justice for the person who has had wrong done to them.

He talked about things like sewer backups, the nuisance liability, the liability for the nuisance of a sewer backup, and explained that this legislation will make it impossible for a property owner to collect compensation for the cost that's inherent in a sewer backup down in your basement. You know, you've got your rec room, you've got the carpet with the foam back, some imitation mahogany panelling. Maybe to a person like Al Leach, with a thick white shag, that sort of basement rec room is not the sort of place where you'd want to park your Lhasa apso. But to people where I come from, a rec room that as often as not they've built themselves or as often as not they pay hard-earned money to have built for them, the destruction and damage that's caused by a sewer backup is phenomenal.



I know the response of Mr O'Toole: Mr O'Toole would say, "Well, that person should carry their own insurance." That's what Mr O'Toole would say. I wish that some of the members of this government who have been oh so eager to argue —

**Mr Galt:** He's the member for Durham East.

**Mr Kormos:** Yes, Mr O'Toole. That's the one that that's referring to. In any event, Mr O'Toole was eager to talk about the fact that people should insure their own homes. You see, the problem is that anybody who has been on a municipal council who's received a call at 2 or 3 in the morning or at 7 or 8 in the morning to go and look at a homeowner's basement where the sewage and effluent is more than ankle deep knows that it's easy to tell that homeowner to use their own insurance, but the reality is that homeowners who make insurance claims of that type find themselves in short order being literally blacklisted, blackballed, by the insurance companies, having reached the point where they can no longer insure their houses.

The fact is that here's a bill that's going to service or accommodate municipalities by relieving them of the liability for the damage that's caused when their sewers back up into a homeowner's basement. We shouldn't be buying into that. At the end of the day, the real break there goes not only to the municipality but to their own insurance companies. I've got a feeling that this really isn't about the municipalities decrying the cost of insurance coverage but is more about insurance companies not wanting to accept responsibility for insuring for the breaches of conduct by their clients like municipalities.

Quite frankly, the same argument could be made with respect to the liability of municipalities for the conditions of roads or sidewalks or other public spaces. If there's a problem with insurance premiums, with insurance rates, why doesn't this government deal with the problem and address the issue of insurance companies who perpetually gouge and overcharge?

What this bill does is relieve the municipality of any responsibility for its wrongdoing. As has been mentioned, as we see a deterioration in support for municipalities by this government, we're going to see a deterioration of infrastructures. As we see the selling off or contracting out or privatization of things like water and sewer systems, we're going to see a diminished responsibility on the part of those operators for the maintenance of quality water and sewer systems and we're going to witness more and more victims of something as mundane but tragic for a homeowner as a sewer backup.

What this bill does is very much part and parcel of paving the way to the privatization and the deterioration of services by municipal levels of government, because they'll be forced into doing that by a province that persistently and continuously and with no shame, unabashedly, attacks municipal services and undermines municipal governments.

**2020**

One of the sections of the bill that's been of real concern and one that sneaks its way in, it just weaves its way in there into the viscera of the bill — and you know this, Speaker — is section 79. Again, that's one of the problems with these types of omnibus bills. That's why

Minister Leach, he of the Lhasa apso called Tory — did you see in the story that the minister bought a king-sized bed so the dog could get into bed with he and his partner? Lhasa apsos are not that big. We're not talking here about a Rottweiler; for that, you need a king-sized bed. If Minister Leach and his spouse can't get a Lhasa apso into a queen-sized bed, there's something seriously wrong with his planning ability and his organizational ability.

Just like Tory would be inclined to sneak into Minister Leach's bed, we've got Minister Leach sneaking section 79 into Bill 86. You know why I raise that, because section 79, in Bill 26 tradition, permits this government, or quite frankly successive governments — but no, the dirty work is going to be done by this government — to impose upon a municipality what could very well be a private sector operation to restructure the public transportation of that municipality.

What are we talking about? We're talking about cities like Welland that have worked hard and paid their dues to develop a public transit system, that operated with all the best of motives. Now they're confronted with section 79 of this Bill 86, which lumps school busing, public transit, almost all other forms of municipally regulated transit, lumps them together under the new term of "community transportation." It gives the government, again, the undisputable power to appoint a "corporation, firm or unincorporated association to provide, facilitate, coordinate or restructure community transportation," without any consent or agreement or approval or acceptance of this proposition by city hall or by school boards or by any other facet of the community.

You know where that's going to take us, don't you, Speaker? You know exactly where that's going to take us. That's going to be big corporate friends, the Laidlaws of the world. Just as Tory would jump into bed with Minister Leach, Laidlaw would climb into bed with this government in a New York minute. That would give the Laidlaws of the world fiat power if appointed to do so by this government, and those are the people this government's going to be going to.

Clearly they don't have regard for publicly elected boards. They're going to encourage municipalities to downgrade municipal councils, to reduce the number of people who speak for residents in their community of municipal councils. They're going to be imposing on municipalities the prospect of private corporations with their own very clear profit motives, impose them upon municipalities, such that they can similarly seize and destroy public transportation as municipalities have worked so hard for so long to do it.

Unfortunately, time is running short, but there's one other issue that I wanted to raise with you, Speaker, and that was the issue of the period of election campaigns, because again some folks here have been talking about what a great thing it is to reduce the overall length of the election process from 18 months to 13 months and to reduce the period of an election campaign municipally.

But at the same time as this government will do that, this government is going to permit media advertising so it's no longer restricted to the 28 days before voting day. What does that mean? That means rich candidates,



wealthy candidates are going to be able to engage in protracted newspaper, billboard, media advertising, it would appear, from the period from January 1 of the election year through to the election date itself. Is that a level playing field? Far from it. Once again, this government has no interest in seeing people participate in the democratic process; rather it wants to create an oligarchy here in Ontario that's a reflection of its own very special white-carpeted — white shag, plush-carpeted — with the little gold cherubs on the mantel.

That's the vision this government has. That's Mike Harris's Ontario. If you don't have the white plush carpet with the little gold cherubs on the mantel and if you ain't in Rosedale as your domicile, then you're not part of the process here. This government again wants to paint a rosy picture by suggesting that by imposing entry fees on people wishing to participate in municipal elections, somehow that's going to streamline the process. You and I both know what it's going to do. It's going to mean that the electoral process and participation in it as a candidate is going to be designed increasingly for the wealthy, just as the protracted advertising campaigns are.

I tell you, Speaker, this government had better make sure that this bill, if it passes on second reading, gets itself out into the hands of every municipal councillor, every municipality, every big city and small town in this province and that it be the subject matter of public hearings so that the fraud that's being perpetrated here in the way this 153-page bill, An Act to provide for better local government — better local government? This is an act that begins the process of abolishing local government and of placing fiat power for the control of municipal affairs in the hands of Mike Harris and his cabinet at Queen's Park.

I'm not going to support this on second reading, Speaker. You know that, don't you? I thank you kindly for your time.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Galt:** I'm very pleased to hear the member for Welland-Thorold refer to Tory, the Lhasa apso dog of the Honourable Al Leach. Being a veterinarian, I was particularly pleased to see that he spent some \$10,000 to look after Tory. You know, that's just marvellous to help the veterinary profession. I'm real proud he's in the hands of a concerned pet owner and is being well looked after, regardless of the depth of the shag carpet that you were showing us there a few minutes ago.

I think this bill, as the member for Welland-Thorold was referring to, is just great as the councils have the opportunity to be truly autonomous. Once this bill is in place, it'll be their choice how big their councils will be. They will choose the size of their councils, not somebody in Toronto at Queen's Park. They will decide the manner of elections, the size of the wards, how those wards should be divided up.

It won't be Queen's Park that will be telling them how to go about bringing those wards or what the names of the councillors or aldermen or alderwomen or whatever you call them should be. They will decide on the names they will be using. They'll have choices. Like the polls, yes, will have to be open from 10 in the morning to 8 at

night, but they'll have a choice whether they want to open them earlier when people are on their way to work.

I noticed the member for Welland-Thorold referred to bankruptcy and members being bankrupt. The direction the NDP was carrying us in the last five years, I can understand why he'd be very supportive of that: spend like crazy and end up bankrupt. I can see where you would be quite enthused that we would have councillors, whether they're bankrupt or not, it should be a good role, a good position for them to be in. Oh, you're trying to twist it around. I can tell you're trying to tilt the boat and get it on a level playing field. We did appreciate your comment and your support in that direction, but the councils will be autonomous.

**2030**

**Mr Gravelle:** Certainly it is good to have another opportunity to talk about some issues related to municipalities. This government just about a year ago brought down Bill 26, which had and will have an enormous impact on municipalities in light of some the rather draconian, bullying sort of parts of that particular bill.

One thing that concerns the municipalities in northern Ontario is the municipal affairs minister coming to Thunder Bay, actually, when the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association was holding its spring meeting. The minister came and told them quite bluntly, and rather rudely I thought, that what this really was all about was reducing the number of municipalities that would be managing to stay in place in the province. He made it clear that there were 800 municipalities and he wanted there to be 200 municipalities in the future, and that if indeed the municipalities didn't find their own way to amalgamate or to subdivide, he would make them do it themselves and in fact he would make them pay for that.

So it's interesting seeing a bill like this, which is being painted and pictured as a bill for better local government. What is not really being said is that we're not sure what the local governments are really going to look like, let alone the reality of the fact that there are going to be massive transfer payments to municipalities, that there are going to be remarkable extra costs to municipalities.

As I mentioned earlier this evening, in terms of the responsibilities now being expected or that will be expected by municipalities to pay for fighting their forest fires, it is rather coy and cute of the government to try and put forward this as a bill for better local government when there is so much more that is to come, let alone the frightening aspects of Bill 26 that the minister, in essence, seems to have quietly backed away from but we have no doubt he will be bringing forward in the very near future.

**Ms Martel:** I want to follow up on some of the comments my colleague from Welland-Thorold has made and congratulate him on his remarks here this evening.

I too have a concern about this whole question of accessibility for voting. The government seems to think that if people can use the Internet or can use home computers, that's somehow miraculously going to change voting patterns in municipalities across the province, and that people who before had no interest whatsoever in taking a drive down to the polling station to vote are



somehow going to get on their home computer and now exercise their democratic right.

I think, regrettably, it's going to take a whole lot more than that and that responsible politicians have to be looking at the ways and means by which they can involve more people, can make it more accessible but can convince people that they should exercise their democratic vote. I don't think the élitism in voting, as my colleague has called it, is going to quite do the trick and get more numbers of people participating, exercising their democratic right in the democratic process.

I am very concerned about the relief from liability that the government wants to provide municipalities in this bill, and for the life of me I cannot understand why they want to do that unless the municipalities have come and said that the insurance companies want a little bit more than they already have, which is a whole heck of a lot, and enough, in my humble opinion. As a homeowner, I am fortunate that I can afford extended coverage to deal with sewer backups. I suspect there are a whole lot of people in my community who can't afford to do that.

I say to the government members, why is it then that homeowners who have something like that happen in their home shouldn't expect to be afforded protection? Why shouldn't the municipality have to deal with those things? Why we should ever expect, with the much-reduced staff that MTO is going to have when this government is finished, that MTO is going to be in a position to determine standards of sidewalks etc is just beyond me.

One final point: Having met Charlie the beagle before his untimely demise, I believe he could take Tory any day of the week.

**Mr Bradley:** I found, as I always do, the words of the member to be very interesting on this and some other subjects. I was wondering, however, when he was speaking whether he had fully the opportunity to canvass the issue of municipal campaign spending, because one of the provisions of this act in fact deals with municipal campaign spending and seems to loosen some of the control on that.

We all know that the opportunity at the local level for developers, for instance, and others who have proposals to get at local councillors is far greater than it is to get at provincial people. They often are people with whom they go to church or go to social clubs or associate with in some way or another, people they see on the street, who have more of a chance as developers or proponents to influence local politicians.

So we can see more severances granted or more rezonings granted or things of that nature, and when I see some loosening, what looks like loosening, of the control over municipal campaign spending and the province stepping back from that through its provincial agency, I wonder whether the member has a concern that I have, that indeed we could see increased opportunities for some corruption. I know all of us, regardless of our political backgrounds, would want to avoid that, but when one starts deregulating, that's a long slippery road down to some rather unfortunate circumstances, and I know the member, if he has a moment or two, might want to address this.

**Mr Kormos:** I appreciate the response and I appreciate the fact that the member for Northumberland — we have been chastised earlier. That's the member for Northumberland. His wife calls him Doug Galt.

**Interjection:** Dr Galt.

**Mr Kormos:** Perhaps his wife calls him Dr Doug Galt. But the member for Northumberland, again, was trying to pay attention, and I appreciate that, but the fact is that we're dealing here with 153 pages of amendments to the Municipal Elections Act, the Municipal Act and some brand-new stuff standing all on its own. There's some real sneakiness about the way that a whole lot of this stuff is being presented.

When the member for St Catharines, whom his constituents call Jim Bradley, speaks about the fears that this bill can generate in terms of what's being promoted and what type of funding and expense controls are being promoted, when we observe that the legislation very specifically restricts the campaign period to 28 days for a municipal election, which gives you carte blanche in terms of media advertising, we're talking about this government, as I say, being well on its way to creating something no less than an oligarchy when it comes to municipal governments. We're talking about legislation which is part and parcel of the overall plan of privatization, of de-governmentalization and of direct control and authority over municipal issues by Queen's Park.

It's the sort of thing — reference was made to this earlier — that's almost Soviet in its approach and style, and who'd have thought, from all the people who would be emulating that sort of centralist policy and control, it would be this gang of so-called revolutionaries.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further debate?

**Mr Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise to speak on behalf of my constituents in Oxford during this debate on the Better Local Government Act. As you may know, Madam Speaker, before being elected to this honourable position, I was involved in municipal politics for many years in Oxford county and I've experienced some of the problems with the present system.

As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I was asked to chair the Advisory Group on Municipal Government Reform. The advisory group was set up last fall and has met over the last year to discuss the legislative framework under which municipalities work, clarification of responsibilities between different levels of government and issues of local autonomy and municipal issues.

The group was struck to give input to establishing more capable municipalities which are modern and streamlined, promoting more innovative, efficient service delivery, elimination of duplication and overlap in the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government. Our group's goal was clear, to set out a new framework for structure outlining the organization and powers of municipal government with respect to governance authority and responsibilities.

I believe we represent a fair cross-section of the municipal community in Ontario. Our group is composed of individuals with different outlooks on restructuring, with their own views on where this reform should be



headed. The members not only brought their own experience that they have honed from their individual councils, but also their different experience of dealing with regional issues.

At the outset, our role was to advise the minister on restructuring of municipal governments across this province and to review and revise the Municipal Act as required. We believe this act reflects the input and experiences of that committee.

2040

I also want to point that while the committee discussed issues it determined needed changing, it also invited a lot of input from outside groups and individuals to get a clear picture of what municipalities are facing in Ontario.

I do not need to point out that when this committee was formed, our time frame was about six months, with the opportunity of being extended. I can tell you now that we have met for almost 10 months because there are numerous issues in regard to municipal reform which need to be reviewed. While this sounds like a phenomenal task, the advisory group did have a strong starting point as it looked at the numerous reports and studies on municipal restructuring that have been done over the years. I believe, as I look at this act, that the advisory group has done its work to give the minister input on the needed changes.

All the different parts of this legislation have a common goal: to give municipalities the flexibility to be more accountable to the people they represent. For instance, under this act municipalities will be allowed to change the size and composition of council. For years the people of Ontario have said they have too much government. Throughout the province we have small and large municipalities represented by the same number of council members. It's obvious that for the small townships this may not be the most efficient way to do business, but it has been difficult to change.

With the amendments in this act, council now can decide on behalf of its own constituents what will work best for them. These are the people who have the most contact with the ratepayers. If the people disagree, their council will be informed.

Though local autonomy is present, a basic minimum is included in the legislation. Also, these changes have to be put in the public eye, with advertised meetings before a bylaw can be passed, to let constituents know about the changes. Members of the advisory group felt strongly that municipal councils are responsible to those they represent and they should have the ability to decide on the size and shape of governance.

Some of the other changes in regard to composition are again best left to be addressed by local council, such as whether representatives are called mayor, reeve, councillor or alderman or something else entirely. These types of housekeeping items allow a council in a community to choose what is right for them. It is a small item but one that allows community identity.

Municipalities will also have the discretion to decide whether council members will be elected to represent a distinct area or wards or to represent all the residents of a municipality, or a combination of the two. Again, if council wants to change the way its residents are repre-

sented, there is a requirement for public notice of the change and to hold a public meeting.

Making this type of change will no longer require the approval of the Ontario Municipal Board but council's decision on this issue can be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board, so residents who are opposed to the change do have a recourse. However, if there isn't an appeal on the matter of representation, the bylaw changing ward structures will come into effect as soon as the bylaw is passed. In other words, it is appealable but not approved by the Ontario Municipal Board.

There are also changes in the municipal election process to help make it a more flexible process while ensuring electoral integrity. A number of changes are being made to ensure accessibility and integrity. We need to ensure the privacy of the electorate and their voting rights while also ensuring that people responsible for running the election can do a job efficiently.

Basically, the Municipal Elections Act is being brought up to date. It will continue to be flexible so it can meet the community's needs but also modernized to allow voter flexibility and convenience. Changes to the voting rights, methods and residency requirements are important to give seasonal residents the ability to hold accountable their representatives on their local councils in the case of dual residence and cottage owners.

In speaking with the public, many people have come forward to say that they wanted to exercise their franchise but were unable to do so because of distance and inconvenience involved. Municipal governments will be able to institute other voting methods to allow greater access, such as electronic or by phone or through mail-in ballots. They must also continue to allow proxy voting for those unable to attend the polling station.

Municipalities will also be able to extend voting opportunities if they wish, but they are mandated to have polls open from 10 am to 8 pm on election day. This will maintain a consistent election day in Ontario. All voters will know what day the election will be held and what times the polls are open. Traditionally, there is a low voter turnout for municipal elections, which is unfortunate, as it is these politicians who have the greatest impact on local services. These changes will make voting easier, more convenient and could hopefully help increase the voter turnout for municipal elections. We are not only making it easier to cast a vote; we are also making it easier for those who want to be a candidate, as we are moving to combine registration and nomination of candidates on the same forms.

I want to clarify a point made by the honourable member for Kingston and The Islands in previous debate. The member spoke on the issue during the debate. He indicated that this change would force candidates to decide much earlier in the year which office they would stand for. In fact, under the present legislation, when a candidate registers they must also outline the office they are seeking and raising funds for. This bill will not shorten the time for a candidate to decide about which office to campaign for. This act will significantly lessen the paperwork involved in municipal elections. The number of prescribed forms will decrease from 40 to five.



To help eliminate phantom and frivolous candidates, each candidate will be required to make a deposit before officially becoming registered. This deposit will be refunded if the individual is elected or reaches a certain percentage of the votes. This percentage will be low enough so as not to discourage any legitimate candidate from seeking office.

Once an election is held, recounts by the clerk will only be held if there's a tie vote or if the local council or board decides it is in the public interest to hold a recount or if the courts decide there are legal grounds for a recount. These recounts will no longer be automatically held simply because it was close.

Recently in my municipality, in a municipal by-election there was a recount as there was only one vote separating the two candidates. Granted, the number of ballots was fairly small in this race, but there was no questioning of the official results. No one indicated that a recount was needed for the sake of the public interest. In this case, the only reason the votes were recounted was due to how close the results were. With the Better Local Government Act, this type of recount will no longer be the case.

By increasing this local flexibility, changing the rules on recounts and shortening the process, we're allowing municipalities to improve efficiency while maintaining integrity and moving to create a system that will save taxpayers money. Overall, these changes in the act are flexible to the community, less complicated and will ensure that all voters across the province have accessibility to the polls.

Municipal liability is also an issue we have been hearing a lot about lately, especially in relation to the cost of municipal liability insurance. The cost of liability insurance is on the rise. Many people are saying the increase is due to recent court decisions giving substantial awards for events caused by circumstances beyond the control of the municipality. Municipalities have said for some time now that they need to be protected from people launching frivolous lawsuits that affect the business of their municipality. Prior to 1989, municipalities were not responsible for damages incurred as a result of public works they were legally permitted to do unless the project was carried out in a negligent way. A court decision changed that, and as a result of this precedent municipalities are paying out large settlements for nuisance-type claims such as sewer and watermain backups and breaks.

Municipalities have been saying that what they need is predictable and avoidable liability. I want to point out that if a municipality is negligent, they should and they will be accountable for the damages. This government will not allow municipalities to be protected from liability for disregarding their responsibilities. Under the Better Local Government Act, municipalities will also have a clearer understanding of what their responsibilities are when it comes to standards of care, especially for roads and bridges under their jurisdiction. As the minister pointed out during the introduction, the Ministry of Transportation is being given regulatory powers to set standards for municipalities. Courts will judge the liability based on whether the municipality has met the stand-

ards of care as set out by the ministry. If a municipality fails to meet these standards of care, it will be held liable.

These changes to areas of nuisance liability and liability for negligence will lead to a balance between what is an appropriate level of municipal responsibility, while at the same time allowing municipalities to keep costs down. At present, our government is continuing review of liability issues as they relate to building inspection, occupier's liability and joint and several liability.

**2050**

Now I want to touch on the municipal debt and investment policies.

**Mr Galt:** Hear, hear.

**Mr Hardeman:** Thank you. First, I want to say that this act does not increase the amount of money a municipality can borrow. The limitations outlined in present legislation will continue to be valid. The process is not changing to allow deficit spending. Municipalities will continue, as they have in the past, to pay as they go. However, they will be able to borrow at lower cost, as this legislation gives them the ability, along with other broader public sector bodies, to cover each other's short-term borrowing requirements. These arrangements would help reduce short-term borrowing costs and, in turn, save money.

When it comes to debenturing capital projects, this act will allow municipalities to issue variable rate debentures. Many people are taking advantage of the low interest rates we have today and municipalities should have that same opportunity. Present legislation does not allow issue of variable rate debentures. In the past, that has been in place to limit the risk, but today it has turned into a situation where municipalities may be paying more than they should to borrow. We will allow municipalities with at least a AA- credit rating to issue these variable rate debentures.

This act will also give municipalities the authority to take advantage of opportunities in capital and financial markets to reduce cost while ensuring fiscal integrity and prudence. We are giving them the tools to keep up with capital markets and improved practices in regard to municipal borrowing and investing while ensuring that they are doing so wisely.

As an example, municipalities will be allowed to invest in a range of instruments, excluding publicly traded corporate stocks. To help monitor investments, municipalities will be required to prepare a statement of investment policies and goals, as well as prepare an annual report to council on compliance with this statement.

I think it is evident from the proposed legislation that this act is aimed at more effective, cost-efficient government that is in tune with its constituents and still able to compete on a firm financial footing in today's markets.

We are moving to change the way municipal governments operate. It is a change that has been a long time coming and in many cases has been at the request of both the residents of Ontario and the municipal representatives themselves. By making this type of change, municipal councils will be able to decide how best to do business in their community and they will be able to do it in a more cost-effective manner.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?



**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the member for Oxford, who obviously illustrates some of his own experience and knowledge in dealing with municipal affairs. I suppose my first comment in relation to Bill 86 has to be its relationship to the Crombie commission's Who Does What panel and, as has been mentioned before, the feeling of some councils today, wondering whether they will even still exist and their response to looking at reducing red tape when they may have a different amalgam.

In my neck of the woods, the Ottawa-Carleton area has put in a great deal of effort, and a reform paper by the regional council has just come forward. Some members may have seen it. I think it's a document worthy of serious consideration. It's a modification of the 11 municipalities actually becoming three municipalities, with still some division between the local municipalities and the regional government. I believe that has a fair amount of merit at this stage.

In the long term it might indeed be one tier, but I must tell you that the people of the Ottawa-Carleton area are quite worried that they will not be part of determining the constructs of their own larger municipality, or structures. Their worry is, seeing what they've seen heretofore, that there will be something imposed upon them. Their worst worry is that what might be imposed is what might be perceived as being the cheapest possible way for the region to go in terms of the relationship with the provincial government and —

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** In commenting on the member for Oxford's remarks, it's interesting to note that while he went on — and on and on — from his prepared text about an awful lot of the detail in this very large, all-encompassing bill, some 153 pages, he spent little time, if any, talking about section 79, which is of particular interest to those who care about public transportation. Interestingly, it doesn't really seem to fit with the rest of the bill. The bill talks primarily about municipal governance and elections. Everything's related to the running of municipalities, and there out of the blue is dropped in this section 79, which we've been speaking to tonight and will speak to at greater length — certainly I intend to if the opportunity comes up this evening — wherein the minister à la Bill 26 is giving himself incredible amounts of power to step in and indeed usurp municipal structuring.

It's interesting that while the parliamentary assistant talks at great length about democracy and returning power back to the local level, section 79 can, if all the powers are used, take a great deal of power away from municipalities, away from communities, and impose on them a governance for community transportation — a new term that's created for the purposes of this bill — whatever they choose. Like Bill 26, we're convinced that if the power's in here, unfortunately this government will use it, and that's not necessarily good for democracy.

**Mr Hastings:** I'd like to just point out that the member for Oxford drew the attention of all members of the House to the content and detail in the bill — I think he drew from his own practical experience of many years in

municipal government and how this related, I thought, quite well — and interlinked up some of the difficulties he had experienced and seen as the mayor of his municipality with what the provisions are in Bill 86, as there will be adjustments to overcome those problems.

I think the key to the whole situation relates to the points of municipal flexibility in terms of administrative savings, in terms of giving the municipalities what they have been asking for for so many years through AMO, and those municipalities that have never been members of AMO: the tools to deal with getting more value out of their investment dollars in terms of when they have to make debentures for capital assets, in terms of the variable rate flexibility, variable rates of interest and particularly the repayment schedule I alluded to earlier in my remarks today.

I think also, in view of the terms of accessing the vote for people as citizens in our democracy, contrary to the views we often hear in the House from members opposite, this is not a bill that attacks democracy; it is a bill that has the heart and soul of advancing democracy in terms of allowing more people to participate in local government, whether it's through going to the polls to vote or in the new proposed ways as laid out in Bill 86.

**Mr Bradley:** I also want to look at the community transportation aspect of the bill, which the member did not spend a good deal of time on, because it reminds me of the cuts the province is making to public transportation, as we refer to it. I guess that's supposed to be an unacceptable word now in the days of the new revolution, but there have been considerable cuts to public transportation and, as a result, the most disadvantaged people in our society are the ones who pay the consequences. People of means usually have their own vehicles and the wherewithal financially to operate those vehicles. Those who aren't able to operate vehicles and still have money have the opportunity to access other private ways of moving around a community or around a province or a country. But those who are affected most are those who do not have the financial means and rely on public transport.

While we are always prepared to subsidize roads, and indeed we want to keep our roads in good shape in this province, it's never referred to as a subsidy; it's referred to as infrastructure money. The same is not true of transportation, where governments today — at least this government, and other governments, I must say, of the same ilk — seem to be aiming at public transportation as an area where there should be considerable cutbacks. That includes Paratransit for disabled people who have to get around their own communities and who had won the right some time ago to be able to have that kind of access to public transportation. So I hoped in this bill we would have seen a reference to saving public transportation for those who need it most.

2100

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The member for Oxford has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Hardeman:** I'd like to thank the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale for his kind comments about my presentation, and the members for Ottawa Centre, Hamilton Centre and St Catharines for their comments as



they relate to that part of the presentation I made and that part which I didn't make.

I would just like to comment to the member for Hamilton Centre, in his preface to his comments about my presentation, first of all, that it was a prepared text. I make no apologies for being prepared to come to this Legislative sitting, as opposed to some who will come and just go on and on. I would point out, as he referred to the length of my presentation, it was not the length of half an hour which some members would require or seem to require to make their points.

**Interjection:** Or 90 minutes, as he does.

**Mr Hardeman:** Exactly, or 90 minutes, as was mentioned.

I do want to thank him for pointing out the areas of the bill that concern the members. I do want to point out that the transportation portion of the bill is not designed, as was suggested by them, to put us out of the public transportation business, but in fact it is, again, to give local autonomy in all aspects of local government.

Again, I want to say thank you to the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale and thank you, Mr Speaker, for the time.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this particular bill. It's one of the more benign pieces of legislation the government has brought forward. However, we always look for particular points in the bill that could be of some concern to the general public in this province, and indeed some of those do exist.

In terms of the bill itself — and it has a good deal to do with municipal elections — I think most people want to see as efficient a municipal election as possible. I can't recall the amount of deposit that's required for candidates, and while we want to discourage those who are there simply to be nuisances or to be frivolous candidates — we saw an example of that in Vancouver — I don't think we would want to see a figure in a bill or in a subsequent regulation which discouraged people of modest means from seeking public office.

It's a difficult balance for governments. It seems to swing back and forth. You get the example of Vancouver and everybody says, "You'd better do something about this," because the ballot is so long and most of the people are really not serious candidates, even by anyone's most favourable definitions. So one looks at that and wonders if in the future, if it's included in legislation, indeed that will be increased. I hope that would not be the case.

We always have to look at legislation in the context of overall government policy. This comes in in connection with several other bills or initiatives that are forthcoming from the government. My constituents for the most part would say they're coming too quickly. They would say the changes are too drastic. They would say the government's not looking at the consequences. They would say it's not a traditional Conservative government which moved cautiously and very carefully when implementing its policies.

This government, with its whiz kids, the people who advise it, who are not elected members, wants to move forward with the reform agenda, with the revolutionary agenda which it has set out for itself, but I suspect some

of the more cautious members of the caucus, some of whom have served at the local level, some who have served as assistants to members in years gone by, would know that it's important to move with care and caution so that you do things right.

I'm sure the government members themselves hear from people, their own friends, their own supporters, "Look, we like the general direction in which you're going, and you're addressing some problems we think had to be addressed," those people will say, your supporters, but they'll say: "Why are you moving so quickly? You have a full five-year mandate if you wish to take it. Why must you move so rapidly and so drastically?" I agree with that sentiment.

I don't deny the government the opportunity to move forward. It has a mandate given to it by the people of this province, and indeed the government has a right to put forward its legislation for consideration in this House. But the government backbenchers — and "backbencher" is just a term we use — the non-cabinet people in government, have a special responsibility and role to play, because those of us in the opposition, while we can publicly indicate our opposition to certain provisions in legislation and regulations, you have a different role to play. We can do that. The government members in the back rooms, and I don't use that in a bad sense, in a negative sense, in the caucus room, where there is simply a situation where members of a party get together to discuss matters, you have an opportunity to question the ministers, or should have, and to try to change their minds when they're moving too quickly.

If I may divert my remarks just for a small moment, Mr Speaker, I suspect that's what happened on the bill which would allow VLTs, video lottery terminals, in every bar, every restaurant and every neighbourhood in Ontario. I think probably what happened — and you're a member of the government caucus when you're not sitting impartially in the chair — was that some of the members were getting a lot of flak from commonsense people who said, "If you're going to put them in, put them in controlled situations like the big casino or racetracks or something, but we don't really want them in the restaurants and bars." As a result, while it's in the legislation, the Premier was up saying to us that wouldn't be part of the government's agenda.

I point that out because I think members of the back bench, contrary to what sometimes is said, have a role to play to put the brakes on the government when it's needed, because once it hits the House, the government feels a compulsion to move forward and doesn't want to bow to what might be perceived to be opposition criticism or pressure; even though it does it sometimes, it doesn't like to do it. So government non-cabinet members have a specific role to play if they want to exercise it.

You will find out in the long run that the person the Premier will respect the most, if the Premier's got any common sense, and I think every Premier has it, is the person who will disagree not every week at the caucus meeting but will disagree on specific issues, because there will always be members, and you know who they are, in the government caucus, in every government caucus, who say what the Premier wants to hear, because they think



that's the quick route to the cabinet. Is the word "sycophant"? Is that the word they use?

**Mr Gravelle:** Sycophant.

**Mr Bradley:** Sycophant, that's it, what they use. Maybe it advances the case, maybe it doesn't.

I remember Larry Grossman, when he was in this House, didn't do that. He sat in the back benches and from time to time expressed himself publicly in opposition to what the government was saying. Larry eventually got into the cabinet and became the party leader at one time. I always thought he was a very capable member of this Legislature. I didn't always agree with him, but I thought he was a capable person. He was a red Tory as well, although when I hear him on the radio now, he's not quite so red now that there's a very, very deep blue government in power. It's good to hear Larry on the radio, because he was a former colleague of ours, and I certainly wish him well in all of his endeavours.

But this also must be taken into context with the sop you gave or the Christmas present you gave to developers in this province, which affects these very municipalities that are affected by this bill, and that is the one where you are now restricting municipalities in their application of development fees. These fees were to be used to construct sewers and roads and to help out with the community projects which will be needed as a result of the increasing population, libraries and arenas and parks and so on. The developers have complained for years about this, so instead of listening to the municipalities — and my dear friend Hazel McCallion, mayor of Mississauga, with whom I had a very nice relationship when I was a minister, is the one leading the charge publicly.

2110

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Bradley:** I must clarify this, because I hear some comments. I will clarify it for the Speaker. In terms of our political relationship, ministers deal with mayors from time to time. I heard Don Cousens, the mayor of Markham, a former member of this House, good friend of many people who are here today, again a more moderate Conservative, certainly complaining. All of these municipalities, Mayor Robertson in Brampton, another Tory, and the Tory regional chairman in York, all of them are saying this government is wrong in that legislation, as it is in parts of this legislation. But as I said on another occasion, it will cause a building boom in Ontario, because they'll have to build bigger halls to hold those Tory fund-raisers to get all the developers in at the same time, because they will be lining up, I assure you.

You also have to look at this bill in the context of your changes to the Planning Act, unwise changes, I think, because they were there to speed up development at the expense of the environment and good planning. There were some provisions of that legislation that were beneficial. Let's not create the impression, those of us in opposition, that every aspect of every bill the government brings forward is evil or ill-considered or unwise. That's not the case. Many parts of bills that you bring forward are good, and we would be supportive of those. We probably wouldn't say too much about them, because we know there are government members to indicate support for those provisions.

But when I look at this bill in connection with the changes to the Planning Act, I fear for planning in this province. I also see something that affects it in there, and I alluded to it when I was asking a question of a previous speaker, and that is the aspect that deals with financing of campaigns. That's always an interesting subject at any level. It says one of the things that's going to happen as a result of this bill passing, when it does, is that the provincial Commission on Election Finances will no longer be responsible for overseeing municipal election finances and only campaign surpluses over \$500 are required to be turned over to the clerk or held in trust for the next campaign. The last one may be fairly practical in the context of what \$500 is today, and so I'm not going to lose any sleep tonight over that one. It's something to be cautious about, but I'm more concerned about your taking the election finances commission out of this in Ontario.

The reason you're doing it is simple: You want to dump the cost on somebody else, on the municipality, so the Treasurer — now we call him the finance minister — can go and say, "Look, our deficit position is better," because you just shoved those costs off on the local government, municipalities, school boards and transfer agencies of other kinds. I become concerned. I put this, again, in the context of planning decisions. You're putting them more at the local level in some cases and you're speeding them up, but I don't think the planning decisions are necessarily good ones.

I can tell you about one that took place in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It's actually, believe it or not, within the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's borders. They had some land designated along the Queen Elizabeth Way right adjacent to St Catharines. The town of Niagara-on-the-Lake decided they wanted to put subdivisions out there, way away from the regular town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, out on the highway, along with big-box retail.

The Tories and others who promote this kind of project say, "Well, there's going to be jobs and profit for people." Yes, there will be jobs, but the jobs will be because people will be going from other shopping areas in designated, properly zoned places out to the big-box retail, largely big American corporate chains, and they'll be buying their goods out there. A lot of the people here I think are small business people who have a concern about downtowns and other established shopping centres within communities. All this does, with the decision they made, is draw it out of the areas and out to the highway, and then you have to drag services out there.

It's hard to believe this, but the regional municipality of Niagara just ignored its official plan. I know the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs would not be happy with that, because that's why we have municipal plans. This is the problem with regional council: It's the backscratching going on. Please don't give us Metro-Niagara government. Please don't give us one government in Niagara called regional government, because all they'll do is back-scratch. "Well, you approve my subdivision and I'll approve yours. We municipalities have to get along well together, so we won't complain about each other's developments," even



when they break every planning principle there is. This is what's happening under the legislation that's there.

The city of St Catharines was opposed to it, but they got told by somebody that the case could cost a lot of money and therefore they shouldn't proceed with it because they might win or might not win before the Ontario Municipal Board. Well, it's unfortunate that today municipalities can't stand up for a principle because they're simply not getting the transfers from the province that they did in years gone by. They have to let principle go out the window and a bad decision go uncontested, except by Stan Ignatczyk who is a former mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake and an interested observer.

It's just bizarre planning, in my view. I'm sorry, I know I will annoy some people in Niagara-on-the-Lake by saying this, and some regional councillors, but I want to tell members of this assembly, if my own city were doing it, I'd be complaining in this House. It's a matter of principle, not a matter of who's doing it.

The other part I worry about in the context of this bill is that all these changes are coming at once and quickly and it's hard for municipalities to digest them and adjust properly to them. Individually some of the changes may be reasonable, and staggered, as they might be from time to time in their implementation, could be more easily received, even by municipalities that don't particularly agree with them.

I was trying to figure out how I could get hospital closings into this. I don't think I can, for some reason, but I just caution the government: Don't arrive in St Catharines closing hospitals. I'll leave it at that because the Speaker is kind enough to give me a few seconds to be able to interject that. I just noted that in this speech.

I note that lower-tier municipalities are allowed to determine the council size, composition and titles, and upper-tier can determine the size and composition. Do you know what my problem with that is? It's not that this shouldn't change from time to time; it should. You see, the existing local council has a vested interest in how big that council is. That's a case where I think at election time there is a reasonable provision for a municipal referendum. That's the kind of issue, I think, that is reasonable at the local level. I'm not a great fan of referenda on a variety of issues that are very complicated and hard to deal with, but this is a pretty basic issue and I would prefer the local electorate to make the decision, or the OMB to oversee it to see that it's not a bad decision being made.

There's an obsession I know in this government with fewer elected representatives. You use the word "politician" because it has unfortunately a negative connotation today. But I remember when I was speaking at another time in response to your bill reducing the number of members of this Legislature. I looked over at one of your members — I won't mention the person because it would be most unfair — but I looked over at a member of the government for whom I have a lot of respect and who has served for some time in this House, and the person was nodding his head in agreement when I was saying that what you do —

**Mr Flaherty:** He was nodding off.

**Mr Bradley:** The member opposite suggest he was nodding off. That is possible, but he was nodding vigorously so I thought perhaps that wouldn't be the case. Perhaps I'm being hopeful, but the point I was making on that occasion was that you demean all elected representatives when you say the "Too Many Politicians Act," because what's happening in many cases, particularly in this Legislature, is that we're the only people whom the people can get at, the locally elected people and those of us in this Legislature. They can't get at the people who sit in the chairs over there, the Premier's advisers. They can't get at — what's his name? Guy Giorno or something like this, one of your big advisers. I apologize to him for not knowing the last name, but there's a fellow who advises, and Leslie Noble and some of the other people. Does Leslie Noble advise as well?

2120

**Mr Murdoch:** Not any more.

**Mr Bradley:** Not any more. She's now a consultant. Anyway, all these wise people, none of whom have been elected the way you have, come up with these schemes and convince you people.

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** Bill Murdoch.

**Mr Bradley:** It may have been Bill Murdoch. The point I'm making is, sometimes it is reasonable to reduce the number of representatives and sometimes it is not. I think you have to look at the individual cases. I'm prepared to say there are cases where it's reasonable to do so, but there's an obsession over there with the Reform Party crowd that you want to get on your side that somehow the fewer politicians you have the better.

I remember when the NDP was in power, the local board of education reduced from 17 to 15 the size of the board. There was big applause from — I won't say which group because one of my colleagues from the peninsula is in the House and was a member of it — but a local group concerned about government expenditures. I heard some of the people in it say: "Isn't this great? They've reduced from 17 to 15." Well, big deal.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** The member is correct. The member interjects, "It would have to be more than that." He would want to get rid of it perhaps. But the point I'm making is that in the context of overall government expenditures, the amount we spend on the democratic process itself is minuscule compared to the amount that is spent overall. It doesn't mean we don't have to be efficient, but this obsession to pander to — and that's what it is — to pander to the Reform Party crowd demeans all elected members in this House and elsewhere.

I often wonder how Conrad Black's newspapers will cover this, because he's now —

**Mr Morley Kells (Etobicoke-Lakeshore):** That is what Michele Landsberg said.

**Mr Bradley:** Michele Landsberg does not quote Liberals in the House but she does quote New Democrats and they do need —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** Well, here's the member — I'm happy because some of my favourite government members are here, a prolific writer in the Toronto Star. The member



for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Morley Kells, the former lacrosse great — at least, lacrosse-builder great — is here, and there was some advice — you see, I'm contending that this legislation wouldn't be needed if it weren't for the tax cut. The member for Grey-Owen Sound, the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, the member for Wellington and the new Speaker of the House, Mr Stockwell, the member for Etobicoke West, among others, said: "It's not the time to proceed with the tax cut because we're going to have to borrow the money. We don't have the money now. We're running a deficit, so we're going to have to borrow the money." So these wise souls — they'll use this in their campaign literature now; the campaign literature will read as follows for Mr Kells, who has used this before: "'Wise soul,' says Bradley," and that will be a compliment to my friend Morley Kells.

But the point I'm making is that these people who have some experience say: "Look, you wait until you balance the budget. Then you can look at across-the-board tax cuts if you want to." Instead, we had a debacle taking place last Thursday, when the government was supposed to announce another — this is additional, because remember, last spring in the budget the Premier and the Minister of Finance said: "That's it. No more cuts. The cuts are over." Now we hear about \$3 billion more in cuts.

What does that mean? That means the Ministry of Environment has fewer people to go out to inspect those who would be polluting the soil and the air and the water of this province. Mr Kells, as a former Minister of Environment, must be beside himself over that fact, and I could say this with any ministry, including the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. So I can understand why you're trying to push these costs away as another form of cutting, because you're trapped by a risky and bizarre tax scheme which has you in a vice because you can't do anything else. You'd now have to either cut deeper and deeper or come up with some magic that is going to avoid the loss of taxes to you.

The Premier has done one thing: He has reneged on a promise by not bringing it in as soon as you promised. That's okay with me, but I want it to be noted, because I've had some Reform Party people tell me, "You know, you should get up in the Legislature and say, 'This government has broken its promise to implement its tax cut.'" I don't want to do that because I think the government simply recognizes reality and it's now paying the consequences. It was a debacle last Thursday. We heard there was going to be a big financial statement, the transfers announced. In sneaks the Minister of Finance into a committee on Thursday afternoon when question period is over and has a non-announcement to make because the government is in disarray on this issue, because there's considerable disagreement.

I see the member for Sarnia here. I had the clipping in my desk but I can't find it now; he doesn't want me to find it. It says "Boushy Attacks Health Minister" or something like that. I'll try to find it later on. So we're seeing some —

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** Jim, "It worked for Larry Grossman 20 years ago, David, so it will work for you now."

**Mr Bradley:** This was back with the closing of the Doctors' Hospital.

**Mr Conway:** Absolutely. Frank closed it and Larry opened it.

**Mr Bradley:** I want to look at the provisions of this bill, and there are important provisions, but I worry about the phone-in and mail-in. I listened to the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale because I wanted to see, am I wrong on this? Is my apprehension about phoning in votes and mailing in votes — I guess it's e-mailing them in — simply because I'm a Luddite? I shouldn't ask that question. Is it because I am computer illiterate and I don't understand how this can work? Am I electronically deficient or something?

*Interjections.*

**Mr Bradley:** All of these. I'm hurt. But I must express at least apprehension on behalf of those of us who can't operate computers and worry about how this telephone technology or the e-mail would work. I hope the government moves with caution on it.

I want to see as much participation as possible, but the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale would be disappointed if I didn't see a plot to the disadvantaged in this province. It's unlikely that poor people in this province would have this electronic equipment available as much as rich people would, so you want to ensure that you can vote right from the Albany Club. You just take your phone at the Albany Club and phone in the vote.

*Interjection:* The St Catharines Club.

**Mr Bradley:** That member mentions the St Catharines Club. I must say that the president of the St Catharine's Club, Barry Matheson, wrote me a letter and said I was invited to come to the St Catharines Club because I always mention the Albany Club in here. That's what happens.

I am coming down to the latter part of my remarks, I know you'll be pleased to know.

Municipal liability is of concern to me. We've had all kinds of flooding take place in our city in places I didn't think it could flood. My basement didn't flood — I didn't look at it for a week, I guess. Maybe it flooded and everything is gone.

**Mr Conway:** If it did, the Cleveland Plain Dealer of 1956 would be in trouble.

**Mr Bradley:** I'm noted for keeping newspapers from time to time and I brought in a newspaper this year that said, "American Troops Land in Lebanon." I was telling somebody about it and they said: "Wasn't that terrible? There's President Reagan sending those troops into Lebanon and he shouldn't have done it." Little did they realize it was President Eisenhower who had sent in the troops, and I had the newspaper. It was of those wide ones from I think July 15, 1958.

2130

**Mr Hastings:** Remember Conrad Black bought it.

**Mr Bradley:** That was an independent St Catharines Standard before Conrad Black bought it and put his wife, Barbara Amiel, and Andrew Coyne, who's so right-wing, on those pages.

I'm pleased to be able to discuss aspects of this bill. It's such a long and detailed bill that it's difficult to get into some aspects of it. It mentions assessment. I want to



tell you I've had people calling my constituency office who are beside themselves over assessments that have taken place which they feel do not reflect what they should be paying. On behalf of those people, if they're watching tonight, I want to say I've raised that issue and I hope the government pays some considerable attention to it.

There's a part on inquiries that I want to look at. Some inquiries have revealed some interesting things, but I don't want to get into the details of those. I want to get into municipal financing and say you've got to watch that very carefully. I go back to the fact that the easiest people for proponents of projects to get at are local politicians. They see them daily in the community, shake their hands, play golf with them, go to social or private clubs or to church with them or see them in many places in the community, and the province is detached from that.

I know they'll say you're being distant, but you're detached, and I think it's much harder, to put it bluntly, to bribe provincial people. I don't think you can bribe the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I don't think that can be done. That's why I think it's better, at the provincial level, to have that overseen than it is at a local level where a person can attempt to bribe somebody that person knows. I don't think provincial cabinet ministers or provincial officials can be bribed, because they're detached from this operation.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Comments or questions?

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** It's with delight that I rise to make a couple of comments on the speech from the member for St Catharines, which as usual combines a fairly high degree of insight into what the government is up to, in pointing out that all this is linked to the tax cut, but he also showed some courage in his comments as he treads on ground which may somewhat be dangerous.

I couldn't help but note his concern about those who can't operate computers. I thought that would be an area he might have stayed away from, given his party's experience this past weekend, but that just shows, I think, the degree of courage this member has, not being afraid to venture into those areas.

I want to say, on a more important note with respect to this bill, that he made a couple of comments that I think were very appropriate among the many he made. One was that this government continues to take pride, if you will, in cutting politicians and how this bill, among other things, facilitates the reduction of politicians. As the member for St Catharines pointed out, we need to be wary of that because you can't really have good government, whether it's at the provincial level or in this case at the municipal level, if you are bent on just simply getting rid of more and more politicians. I think we need to be wary of just buying into the notion that fewer politicians means better government. Fewer politicians may sometimes be needed, but fewer politicians means less access for people to those who can influence. That is something we need to keep in mind.

As the government members want to expand upon this notion of giving people greater powers and greater rights and encouraging democracy and participation, I have to wonder why the Minister of Municipal Affairs then is

hell-bent on amalgamating municipalities within Metropolitan Toronto without giving people any say in that process and any ability to influence a decision the government is about to make.

**Mr Galt:** I certainly enjoyed the presentation the member for St Catharines made. He's just an excellent speaker and has often taken great glee in teasing the members on this side of the House about laughing really hard at the Premier's jokes and smiling at the Premier and enjoying the Premier so much. I couldn't help but notice today how big his smile was when the new leader came in. It was very broad and lasted so long, and he clapped really hard and long. Certainly we wish the member for St Catharines well as the new leader selects the shadow cabinet and critics over the next few days or weeks. We hope you continue as the House leader. We certainly wish you well as we proceed down the road.

You mentioned that we're moving too quickly, that we should be more cautious. Good advice, but with the damage that's been done over the past 10 years you have to move quickly to correct some of those mistakes and some of that mess that was created by the previous two governments.

You referred to the \$3 billion in cuts and the concern. I can tell the member for St Catharines that part of the problem is that the interest is at \$8.7 billion. To put that into some sort of context for you, that would build 13 SkyDomes in the province. Imagine 13 cities with a SkyDome if we didn't have this horrendous debt, which the NDP doubled, and the budget that the Liberals managed to double during their term in office.

We talked about liability and concern. It certainly is good that we're finally addressing, in this bill, the liability in connection with roads and nuisances, particularly as it relates to some discretionary activities of municipal politicians. In the past, because of some of the court activities, we had to address the liability insurance for cars, and certainly on Thursday I'll bring up my concern about liability and risk for volunteers.

**Mr Patten:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the thoughts of the member for St Catharines. I think all will agree that this is a rare member, with his capacity to provide what may appear to be desperate and disparate concepts and weave them all the way through and continue to touch on points in the bill, a very long bill, as he pointed out, and just when the Speaker might be about to call him to relate back to the bill he does so quickly. He moves swiftly, nimbly and very adeptly to other related issues because this man's capacity to think is not confined, of course, to one bill but relates to the totality of the general thrust of the government.

He referred this bill to developers and their particular role in development, development fees, their interrelatedness with the Planning Act, for example. In other words, if you cannot relate the quality and principles of the impact that municipal politicians are accountable for, what sense is there in terms of a structure? It almost goes hand in hand, as he pointed out, with the quality of what one is required to do and on what principles. Of course he correctly pointed out that a lot of this somehow relates to the big tax break, therefore the pressure in every field to try and find ways to cut down costs of provincial



structures or provide vehicles and opportunities for finding funds that otherwise might go to municipalities.

It is not unusual for this member to continue to help us see, in the grand scheme of things, the general thrust of this government.

**Mr Kormos:** Once again I have to address the matter of what the bill does to protect municipalities from claims against them for damage done by municipalities' negligence or wrongdoing to innocent victims. The government's own briefing notes read that cities have expressed concern about increases in the numbers of claims for negligent building inspection and in the number of claims related to the repair of roads. Especially with this government and its undermining of the financing of municipalities, the fact is that there are going to be more claims as a result of ill-repaired or unrepaired roads. There are going to be more claims as a result of faulty building inspections as municipalities become harder and harder pressed to perform their role in this regard.

Some of the members of this government used to have concern about innocent victims and used to believe that innocent victims had a right to be compensated for the damage done to them by the wrongdoer. Clearly this government no longer believes in that, if it ever did. This government is saying that there is going to be an increasing number of victims of municipal negligence, undoubtedly caused by the underfunding of municipalities by this government, and rather than permit innocent victims to seek compensation, what they've done is made municipalities immune from claims against them by victims of municipal negligence and their increasing inability to effect road repairs and to maintain sewers and water supply systems to adequate standards.

This aspect of the bill is a copout. It's a betrayal of residential property owners and taxpayers. This government is sending them to the cleaners.

2140

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for St Catharines has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Bradley:** Thank you to the member for Welland-Thorold, the member for Northumberland, the member for Dovercourt and the member for Ottawa Centre for your input. By the way, I like this part of the — we never used to have this in the House, where you could respond to members. That was an innovation that was placed in the rules that I think is very good, because it keeps all of us on our toes and new points are brought up and counterpoints are made. I think that's very beneficial, if I can comment on that.

I indeed am pleased to see that our new leader has performed so well today. I'm glad that the members opposite note that we have a new leader who will be a person of great capacity, a person of great leadership ability for many years to come, particularly when he becomes Premier of the province.

I'm interested in the member for Welland-Thorold, because he's a lawyer and I'm not, in terms of the liability claims. He makes a good point that I want to respond to, a very good point that perhaps I didn't expand upon sufficiently; that is, because of the underfunding from this government for municipalities, we are seeing worse roads and worse sewer systems. You tend

to notice it on the roads more because we all use the roads, but I haven't seen the roads in this province in various municipalities in such bad shape, ever, as I have recently. So you're bound to have more claims and you're bound to have more claims from sewer systems backing up and breaking down.

In addition to this, the member for Northumberland mentioned the tax cut and the amount of debt there is. I can't understand, if the government is concerned about debt, why it's borrowing more money, as the member from Lakeshore noted — the member for Wellington. Why would it borrow more money when it's already in debt and increase the provincial debt? It doesn't make sense, and I've yet to hear anybody on the government side make sense of it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** It is indeed an honour and a privilege to stand here tonight and debate in this place, particularly when you consider what this government is about to do to this place and consider for a brief second the future of this wonderful place of discussion about issues that are so important to all of us, this place of decision-making where over the years so many learned folks, so many committed and important folks from communities across this province, have stood and talked about things that impacted on the lives of their friends and neighbours. Soon it will be diminished.

I look around tonight and I see members here from all over the province — from Welland, from Sarnia, from Thunder Bay — and I wonder how many of us will be here after the next election, not because we haven't done a good job and not because we haven't worked hard on behalf of our constituents and tried to participate in a way that was responsible and honourable, but because this government has decided that in this province we have too much government, we have too much democracy, we have too many people representing the people of this province in a meaningful way in this place, so they're going to diminish that.

As they move the balance of power in this province from a legislative, representative, democratic system to a more centralized executive type of decision-making, one has to wonder when it will be that this place simply disappears altogether, that there's no longer any use for this place and we will simply turn the affairs of this province over to the real power behind the government of today in Ontario: the corporations and the mandarins of business and the forces of the free marketplace and Bay Street.

Which brings me to the bill we have in front of us here tonight, which on its own is rather an innocuous little piece of work that the Liberals and perhaps ourselves may have wanted to take a look at and perhaps do something with if we were government. But you have to put this piece of legislation into the context of what's been happening over the last year and a half to this province by way of the legislative agenda, the decisions being made every day by this government on behalf of all of us as we see the diminishing and downsizing of all those very wonderful institutions that over the years we've put in place so that there are checks and balances, so that all of us have a voice, so that whatever we do



collectively is done in the best interests of all the people who have chosen or who have been fortunate to have been born into this very, very wonderful jurisdiction that we all have come to know and to appreciate as Ontario.

This piece of legislation, in my mind, if you look at it closely is just another Trojan horse, very similar to every other piece of legislation this government has brought forward. There's lots of warm, fuzzy language; even the names of the bills presented in this House make one feel that this government is interested in the wellbeing of the ordinary citizen out there, of the person who is working very hard to feed his or her family, to put a roof over the heads of their children, to put nice clothing on their backs and to keep the small business community alive in the towns and cities that we all live in. But we know that when you look more closely at these bills, wrapped up inside, in the very middle of them, is usually a bullet, and that bullet is targeted at those who are most vulnerable and who are most unsuspecting of what's coming at them. This bill —

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Kills democracy.

**Mr Martin:** That's right, it kills democracy, it kills communities, it kills people, it kills families.

This piece of legislation is part of a larger agenda, a puzzle this government is putting together that they hope the people of Ontario will not suspect is happening and will only realize its real intent when it's all over. This piece of legislation will change the way our communities operate, will change the very essence of democracy at that level which is closest to people and makes decisions about things that affect people on a day-to-day basis.

This government is about bankrupting small communities, taking away their tax base, taking away their decision-making power, and in such a way that they will eventually throw up their hands and this government will be able to say: "I told you so. See, they can't run their own affairs. They're not responsible. They can't be held accountable. So we will take the power unto ourselves now, because they have shown themselves to be so irresponsible, and we will make the decisions," and ultimately turn that decision-making power over to the free market system, to the mandarins and the barons on Bay Street. And it's presented to us that this in fact will all be in our best interests.

We just have to look at a number of the initiatives this government has introduced over the last year and a half to see just exactly that what I'm saying is true, that every piece of legislation that this government presents is in some way, some significant and important way, a Trojan horse. Every piece of legislation, every decision made by this government has wrapped up in it, when you look at it in some detail, a bullet that is targeted, that is aimed, that has in its cross-hairs the institutions that many decent people over a long period of time have put in place in this province so we could have a democratic system of government, a way of making decisions that considered the needs and aspirations of all the people who live in communities and towns across this province and made sure they had a decent standard of living, an opportunity to be educated and a health care system that was accessible to all.

2150

We simply have to think for a second of one of the very first decisions, probably the first decision, this government made when it came to power, and that was that very awful day in July 1995 when we all woke up to the realization that the poorest in our communities — single mothers, people out of work, the handicapped — were going to lose 22% of their income, the money they counted on to buy the very basics of life, the money they got that very seldom stayed in their pocket more than half an hour, an hour perhaps, in some instances even a day, but eventually got spent in the corner stores and the grocery stores and the small businesses of our communities, on food, on clothes and on housing for themselves and their families and their children.

This government presented that as if it was going to be good for those people, as if somehow this was going to make them better people, as if somehow this was going to make them more responsible people, as if these people, given an opportunity to work and have a real job, would not be interested in that job. We know, from the number of times over the last two or three years in this province when real jobs presented themselves, that no matter what the weather, no matter what the season, literally thousands of people have lined up to apply for those jobs. Very few ever got them. Nevertheless, the folks this government first laid a beating on in taking the reins of power in this province have proven themselves time and time again to be ready and willing to work any time work is presented. But that's not what this government is about.

This government is about squeezing people, this government is about intimidation, this government is about bullying. It brings in these initiatives wrapped in this wonderful language that makes it sound like this is all good for everybody, when we know, those of us who are closest to it, those of us in this House who stand in debate and read this legislation, that it is nothing but another Trojan horse.

Imagine the question of poverty when it's raised. We know that when you take money away from families, when you take money away from mothers and fathers who want to feed their children and then their children go hungry and these families cannot buy clothing for their children, that's the real cause of poverty. That's what puts people in poverty. People are in poverty because they don't have enough money to buy the things they need, the basics in life. That's what creates poverty.

There's not enough jobs. This government came into power saying it was going to create 725,000 jobs for people. We don't know where those jobs are. They haven't been created yet and there is nothing to indicate to us that they're going to be created down the road, particularly for those who find themselves every day more and more behind the eight ball when it comes to their attempt to make a living, to have a decent income coming in so they can buy the kinds of things they need to keep their kids from being hungry or cold or not able to learn properly in school.

This government has the gall to come forward with a nutrition program in schools for kids who are going to go to school hungry and then blame the fact that they're



going to school hungry on their mothers, to not see for a second that the reason more and more people are going hungry, more and more people are in poverty in this province is because —

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I've been waiting some time, and I would ask the member to bring his comments within the context of the debate, municipal elections and Bill 86 that's in front of us, please.

**Mr Martin:** Mr Speaker, I'm trying to create for you and for the members of this House a context so that you will understand where this bill fits in the bigger puzzle that this government is putting in place that will eventually hoodwink us all into believing that what they're doing is good for us, that this bill somehow is going to enhance the ability of communities to make life better for the citizens they are responsible for, when we know in fact what this government is about is on one hand saying to communities, "You will have more power to make decisions about things that affect you," but on the other hand: "We're going to take your money away. We're going to take not only your money away but the base upon which you raise your money away." This government is going to throw —

**Mr Gerretsen:** The democratic rights of people.

**Mr Martin:** Exactly — the democratic rights of people. It's going to throw small communities and medium-sized communities, which are for all intents and purposes the heartbeat of this province, into trauma. You're going to throw them into bankruptcy. You're going to push them to the point where they're going to start agreeing with the program you're presenting, not because they feel it's going to be good for them, not because they feel it's in their best interests, but because at the end of the day they will have no choice.

We shouldn't be surprised, because it's consistent with everything this government has done to date. You present this wonderful, warm, fuzzy, well-heeled and well-named bill that you suggest is going to be in the best interests of everybody and make things better. In fact, we know at the end of the day what happens. Anybody who lives in a community in this province knows when the Minister of Health gets up in this House every day and tells us that there are no cuts to health care —

**Mr Gerretsen:** That's wrong.

**Mr Martin:** That's wrong. We who live in communities, who go back to the communities every weekend, know that health care is being cut in a way that is now creating chaos and diminishing the quality of service that those very well intentioned and hardworking and perplexed administrators and doctors and nurses in our communities are trying hard to deal with but can't. We're told every day when we come in here by the minister, as we ask him questions about that very important issue, that in fact: "No cuts are happening. What are you talking about? Are you crazy? We're reinvesting. We're putting money back in. What's the problem here?" We know that is not what's happening.

Another example of the kind of flim-flam and Trojan horse approach to life in this place is the Attorney General, who has for about two months now in this House, or maybe longer, stood up every day consistently when questioned about the condition of the family

support plan and said there is no problem, and that if there is a problem, it's not his fault, it's not his government's fault, it's our fault. Somehow people who were getting cheques through the family support plan that we put in place are not getting cheques any more.

I just want to share with you because it's important to note that however trained these folks are in making this stuff sound like it's good for us, the people out there will only be fooled for so long. The people out there are beginning to catch on; they're beginning to become aware.

Here's an editorial from the Sault Star in Sault Ste Marie about the family support plan. I thought I'd put it on the record here today. It says, "The chaos in the province's child support system is an absolute disgrace." That's what they say in here. When people find out what this piece of legislation is about, they will be saying the exact same thing: It's an absolute disgrace. "There has been widespread approval of the Harris government's determined efforts to reform many of the operations of government," and, it says here, "with good reason. However, these reforms ought to be based on common sense and a commitment not only to improve the system but also to assure that the changes will not create hardships on people affected." Every piece of legislation, every decision you make, turns out the very same way. The result is that thousands of mothers and children across the province are left without adequate support and with nowhere to turn for action. There was not even a warning that there might be difficulties in the changes that were being made, and so those affected had no chance to prepare for the problem.

2200

We're discussing tonight, Mr Speaker, a piece of legislation that, as I said before, presents as quite innocuous. But we know that at the end of the day, when it begins to roll out and we begin to see the impact and we begin to see communities go bankrupt and we begin to see municipal councils wondering how they're going to find the money to do the kind of things that they know they need to do — to keep roads up, to collect garbage, to do all the very important functions that we as a community collectively decided we could do cheaper together as opposed to individually — we're no longer able to do that, and that's what this government's about.

"Ontario NDP leader Howard Hampton," it says here, "professes to see a pattern here" that has the government thoroughly screwing up programs so that it can say the programs don't work and are now to be handed over to the private sector. That's exactly what's happening with this piece of legislation here: You're going to screw up communities, you're going to cause communities to go bankrupt, and then they'll have no choice. They'll have to follow the agenda. They'll have to follow the program. They'll have to get in line, because if they don't, they don't get the money.

**Mr Kormos:** Get with the program.

**Mr Martin:** Get with the program.

"It's difficult to believe anyone could be so deceitful and uncaring about the hardships such action would create. However, if indeed there is an element of truth in Hampton's accusations, let it be said loud and clear that



the chaos in the child support system doesn't show that a government-run operation doesn't work. It simply demonstrates that this government agency is incompetent to make it work."

You'll be interested in this, Attorney General: It says, "Attorney General Charles Harnick has apologized for the delays in getting cheques out to single parents."

**Mr Gerretsen:** Not in the House he hasn't.

**Mr Martin:** It says here: "It's not enough. The government must act immediately to remedy the situation, even if it takes additional personnel and financing to straighten out the mess. The people of Ontario support reforms to government and its operations. They do not support and will not tolerate bungling and mismanagement that harms the most vulnerable of our citizens and children." I rest my case on that one.

We move very quickly from there to this government's answer to people who find themselves in the very unfortunate circumstances of needing to depend on the system and to be collecting social assistance, and we introduced a concept called workfare. You know, some of the people on welfare voted for you guys in the last election because they thought you were actually going to get them a job.

**Mr Kormos:** They were deceived.

**Mr Martin:** They were deceived, yes. They thought they were going to get a job. Deceived. Deception.

Let me read to you from this very excellent document from a group called Workfare Watch. You guys should subscribe to this. You might learn something. It says:

"Workfare is one of the most divisive issues ever faced by the non-profit sector. There are numerous issues that the voluntary sector has to consider in relation to workfare. We need to recognize that requiring work outside the home in exchange for social assistance represents a fundamental shift in the nature and purpose of social programs. Workfare moves assistance away from eligibility based on need towards providing assistance only to those who prove their deservedness through work. Many volunteer sector agencies are currently considering whether to participate in workfare either to make up for funding losses or because they support the idea of workfare." Sounds like intimidation to me. "There are numerous practical and philosophical considerations for voluntary sector agencies contemplating participation in workfare."

"Workfare is fraught with perils for the voluntary sector. It threatens the entire ethic of voluntarism, relations among paid staff, volunteers and workfare placements and even public support for voluntary agencies."

This is not in any way inconsistent with what's in this bill that we're considering here tonight. We have, across this province, a myriad of wonderful communities, all of them different, all of them with people in them who have histories that are very exciting and worth protecting. They've come together, each one of them, collectively, and decided that they would look after each other, put money into a pool so that they could take care of roads and collect garbage, stuff that they couldn't do individually that they will do now together, and they formed municipal councils and little governments, ways of participating in representative democracy.

Because of the heavy-handedness of this government and its push to present a very lucrative tax break to its friends and its push to turn decision-making and the power in this province over to the corporate sector, they're going to wipe out a whole whack of these little communities. They're going to wipe out a whole whack of these small communities.

**Mr Hardeman:** In this bill?

**Mr Martin:** In this bill and with this bill as it plays itself out in the context of all the other bills that you're presenting. You have to put it in context. You have to see this not as a single piece of work. You have to see this as part of a larger agenda which is going to push small communities into disarray. So they will have to come together and form larger entities and they'll lose their individual identity and will no longer have the wonderful diversity that is so much that which makes up the richness of this province.

But they're not going to get away with it because people out there today in this province are a lot smarter than you think. They're a lot smarter than you think and they're catching on in a big hurry because we're out there telling them and because newspapers across this province are telling them. I guess the ultimate deceit is what you're doing with the economy — what you're not doing with the economy. The ultimate deceit is the way that you're not dealing with the economic challenges that present themselves.

Let me just share with you tonight, because most of you probably didn't read this, a little article written by Richard Gwyn in the Toronto Star back on October 6.

**Mr Kormos:** He's known as a right-wing type.

**Mr Martin:** He's sort of right-wing. Listen to what he says.

**Mr Kormos:** Read it slowly, because most of those folks didn't.

**Mr Martin:** He says, "The big question of the coming decades is how to find a socially acceptable means of dismantling democracy." Interesting. "Governments chosen by the majority are governments chosen by losers," it says here. "Democracy will degenerate to being the means of governing the immobile and dependent service workers," and, "Politicians may promise, but markets decide. Governments are impotent.... The world belongs to the global corporation."

"Now that you know all of this, or at least have heard it proclaimed, do you in fact suppose any of it is actually wrong in the sense of it being inaccurate rather than immoral? Do you doubt all of these forecasts will in fact be fulfilled, indeed are already being fulfilled? They most certainly will be unless there's a popular backlash against this kind of future, mobilized by some inspirational new leader and sustained by some new set of socioeconomic ideas about how societies should organize relations among their citizens."

"These alarming forecasts matter because they aren't the products of any paranoid lefty. Instead, their author is a pristine, pure neo-conservative."

"Ian Angell, a professor of information systems at the London School of Economics," according to Richard Gwyn, "is my favourite neo-con. He's one of the few I know of who is truly intellectually honest."



"The neo-cons you keep hearing about — Margaret Thatcher, Conrad Black, Newt Gingrich, David Frum and the rest" —

**Mr Kormos:** Mike Harris.

**Mr Martin:** Mike Harris, Ernie Eves — "all blather on about how the free market and global free trade, minimal taxes and minimal government will liberate all of us to become freer, richer, more self-reliant, more creative, more responsible."

Can we identify with that? We take money away from the poor. We take 22% out of the pockets of the poor so that they can become freer and richer and more self-reliant and more creative and more responsible. That's what we tell them, and we tell them that not only will they be better off, but the communities in which they live will be better off because they're making less money. Have you ever heard anything so ludicrous?

It goes on here: "It's hard to believe any of them really believe a word they are saying. The consequences of the neo-conservative creed have long been clear. The two most market-oriented western societies, the US and Britain, are today the most unequal in income terms in the industrial world. Both are more unequal than either have been in the past half century. In Britain, some statistical measures show incomes may be more equal now than they were in the middle of the 19th century."

2210

**Mr Kormos:** Mr Martin, read that Gwyn article again. Mushinski didn't get it the first time.

**Mr Martin:** I'll pass it over to her.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Order, please, member for Welland-Thorold.

**Mr Martin:** She can have a look at it before she goes to bed tonight, because it's really a telling piece.

We hear from time to time — and I know I spent some time over the last month at the standing committee on estimates — from the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism talking about the States and what's happening in American jurisdictions, what's happening in Japan and what's happening in Germany. It's too bad he doesn't spend more time in places like Welland, Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury to find out what's happening there, what people are thinking and how the decisions this government is making or not making on their behalf are affecting them directly in the ways that are most harmful to them and their families.

Here's a letter to the editor in the Sault Star that I thought was worth sharing. It says:

"Mike Harris's plan hasn't worked in New Jersey. It's interesting and revealing to learn that the Mike Harris government's Common Sense Revolution, complete with its 30% cut in provincial personal income taxes phased in over three years, was actually patterned on the successful 1993 election campaign of Christine Whitman, the present Republican governor of New Jersey.

"An analysis of the New Jersey experience written by William Walker appeared in the Toronto Star. The author points out that in March 1994 Harris went to New Jersey. Two months later, the Conservative program was presented to Ontarians. According to Walker, in order to pay for the tax cut, Whitman has had to lay off thousands of civil servants, cut many health and social service pro-

grams, slash funding to municipalities and school boards, privatize many government services and siphon more than \$1 billion from the state pension fund," and destroyed that wonderful state.

Anybody who's watched or knows anything about what Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher did to Britain and the United States, and the debt they ran up — Reagan took the debt from the billions to the trillions with this kind of approach to taxation and spending and cutting programs.

That's what's going to happen to communities across this province, wonderful communities like Sault Ste Marie and Kingston, Thunder Bay and Sarnia, when this government is allowed to implement what's inside this bill. When you put it in the context of everything else you do, it all fits together, and none of it is good news. It's a Trojan horse. There's a bullet in this bill wrapped up in all kinds of very benign and innocuous language, and other kinds of things that are not going to be at all good news for the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** I think we've just seen a new record from the member for Sault Ste Marie. I thought the member for St Catharines did a pretty good job of talking a lot about health care, the family support plan, municipal restructuring, the demise of democracy, but the member for Sault Ste Marie has topped him. I just want to help him out a little bit here. It's Bill 86. It's entitled An Act to provide for better local government by updating and streamlining the Municipal Elections Act, the Municipal Act and related statutes.

I just want to quote a few things out of here for the member for Sault Ste Marie in case he hasn't seen them, some explanatory notes on the bill. We're talking about amendments relating to municipal liability, amendments relating to annual assessment updates. We're talking about municipalities being able to pass bylaws providing for the use of alternative voting methods. Are municipalities, elected local boards or the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing entitled to have questions placed on the ballots? Are municipal councils permitted to change council size and composition? It is a rather large document, it does take some reading, but it's an important document.

The thing that I struggle with a little bit — and maybe the member for Sault Ste Marie can help me with this when he gives his final comments. He might be able to tell us, since he didn't make any reference to the bill, what he really thinks about the bill. Is it a good bill? It is a bad bill? Will he be supporting it? Won't he be supporting it?

**Mr Flaherty:** Has he ever read it?

**Mr Carroll:** Has he ever read it? We don't much care about what Conrad Black has to say about it, but we are interested in what you have to say. Maybe in his final two-minute wrapup he could make some comment about how he really does feel about Bill 86.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I'd like to congratulate the member for Sault Ste Marie for his very insightful comments about Bill 86. I think they were extremely beneficial, not only to the members in the House but I'm sure to the viewing audience.



We really know what this bill is all about. There is a section in the bill that gives municipalities much greater abilities to borrow money. You could ask the question, why do municipalities need these powers? Why do they need these newer instruments to borrow more money in more imaginative and different ways? Well, there's only one reason, Madam Speaker. You know it, I know it and they know it. It's because the province has basically decided that within the next year or so it's going to get out of all the grants and subsidies it's giving to municipalities and each municipality will just have to make it on its own.

They realize that there are many, many small municipalities in this province and those municipalities will not be able to do that on their own. So what are we doing? We're creating these larger places with larger assessment bases etc. There will be enough of an assessment base there so that the province says these municipalities can go out and actually borrow the money. That's what this bill is all about. I would like to congratulate this member on pointing that out to us, because he knows and we know and you know that basically this bill is a money bill. It's a downloading bill. It's a bill which will basically allow the province to get out of a lot of different programs that it's currently involved in. It takes insightful members such as the member for Sault Ste Marie to point this out to us.

It was very interesting. The member across the way has read the index of the bill, and I'll congratulate him for that, but I bet he wouldn't have a clue as to what sections 35 or 36 are about, and they are very, very important.

**Mr Silipo:** I know the member for Sault Ste Marie has somewhat irritated the government members opposite because rather than doing a line-by-line analysis of the bill, as he could have done, he chose instead to talk about some of the broader issues this government is dealing with and to point out that in fact —

**Mr Murdoch:** He chose not to talk about the bill, right?

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Grey-Owen Sound, come to order.

**Mr Silipo:** — while we're here debating this bill, which makes a number of changes — significant ones — to the structure of municipal government and which has a number of areas that we can support, as we've indicated in the past, at the same time it's important to continue to remind the members of the government that we haven't forgotten that while the government wants to put so much emphasis on improving local government in this way, through making improvements to the election procedures, for example, to the borrowing procedures that local governments have to follow and many of the other elements that are outlined in this bill, they also forget about how contradictory they are being, to put it mildly, when they refuse to apply some of those same principles to how they approach some of the bigger issues around local government.

You know and I know that we are on the eve of hearing from the Minister of Municipal Affairs about a new system of governance in Metropolitan Toronto, an amalgamation of the six local municipalities into one.

**Mr Murdoch:** Good idea.

**Mr Silipo:** Well, it may be a good idea. I don't think it's a particularly good idea because it omits some significant points that have to be looked at in terms of what the metropolis really is like today and how you govern that in an effective and democratic way. But the important point is that that is about to be done without any respect for the democratic process this government wants to talk about as being in this bill. The member for Sault Ste Marie, while he didn't talk about that specific example, gave lots of examples where the government has been undemocratic, where the government has been very unfair.

2220

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** I have some comments about the speech from the member for Sault Ste Marie. Actually, I was told once that if you can't say something good about it, you shouldn't say anything. I've resisted that temptation. But I do think that he left his colleagues in the front benches squirming. They have four very excellent speakers sitting there, and they had to remain silent and listen to that. Indeed, they were squirming for the people in Sault Ste Marie, who deserve to know what's in Bill 86. Those people are still waiting. They heard more from the members for Kingston and The Islands and Dovercourt about Bill 86 in two minutes each than they heard in 30 minutes from the member for Sault Ste Marie; they would learn more in the coming two minutes. I'm sure that he'll want to make up for the deficiencies.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Hey, we don't need you. Please take it back.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Kingston and The Islands, come to order, please.

**Mr Bert Johnson:** Indeed, they have some very good speakers over there. I see the member for St Catharines, the member for Renfrew North. They are excellent. They can talk on for half an hour and say absolutely nothing as well, but at least you can enjoy it and you learn something for it. They bring in a little bit of history and what happened back in Laurier's time and so on.

It's just that I felt that when we're talking about Bill 86 and we're talking about elections and reforming the Municipal Act, the people we are speaking to, be they here in the House or on television, deserve to hear a little bit about what the debate is about. I'm sure that the people over the last half-hour are going to wonder just what bill is coming in front of us here tonight. They must wonder why we're sitting here at 20 after 10 at night debating on something that has absolutely no relationship to anything that the member for Sault Ste Marie said. I would like to commend him, though, on putting in a lot of time and keeping us here.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time has expired.

**Mr Bert Johnson:** Well, then, I'll stop.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Sault Ste Marie, you may sum up now.

**Mr Martin:** I'd like to thank the members for Chatham-Kent, Kingston and The Islands, Downsview and Perth for participating in this very important debate here tonight and assure them that I have in fact read that



bill, and I tell you, it's consistent with everything else you're doing. That's the point I was making here tonight: You're taking money away from people, you're taking money away from families, you're taking money away from communities and you're giving it to your wealthy friends. That's what you're doing.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. The member for Durham Centre, come to order.

**Mr Martin:** You're shifting power from the traditional democratic representative base that this province has become very proud of over the years and you're putting it in the hands of a few executive mandarin types in the Office of the Premier, who in turn turns it over to the corporate sector, to the boys on Bay Street and the free market system, which in the end is going to hurt all of us.

Bill 86 is lockstep in line with that approach. It presents, as do all the bills that they present here, as very benign, innocuous, a wonderful title, just like they said taking 22% of the income away from the poor was going to be good for them. That's exactly what they're doing with every other piece of legislation that they're presenting. The title of the bill does not tell you what's in the bill. What's in the bill is about taking away money and giving it to the rich. What's in the bill is about taking away power and giving it to a small executive body and Bay Street. That's what this government's about. You're not going to get away with it, because the people across this province — you should go and talk to your constituents.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** I have.

**Mr Martin:** No, you haven't. You haven't heard a thing, then, if you have. Listen to this, "Tony, please also tell Mike to stop destroying the educational system," something we'll talk about another night.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further debate?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. The member for Renfrew North.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Members, come to order, please.

**Mr Conway:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think it is a good thing that at 10:30 in the evening we have such a lively spirit in the place and we have a good bill, I think, to excite members this evening.

**Mr Murdoch:** Don't let us nod off then.

**Mr Conway:** Listen, I'm not about to —

**Mr Shea:** The word was "inflame," Sean.

**Mr Conway:** I'm very sensitive — as the member for Perth takes his leave.

**Mr Bert Johnson:** I haven't left yet. I'll listen to it on TV.

**Mr Conway:** Listen, Bert, how we ever got by without you, I just think — God. If Darcy McKeough knew that there was a Bert Johnson in the wings, he would have retired a lot sooner than 1978.

I appreciate members from all sides who have spoken to this bill. I am very fond of the parliamentary assistant, the member for Oxford, who seems to really know these issues of local government. I've had the pleasure of

watching him do his work in the resources committee when we were dealing with the Planning Act, and he was very adept and obviously knowledgeable.

**Mr Gerretsen:** You'd better get ready, Ernie. You'd better get ready.

**Mr Conway:** Then there's the former mayor of Kingston.

**Mr Hastings:** The former mayor member.

**Mr Conway:** The former mayor of Kingston; I was going to say, "The former mayor of Kingston and The Islands," but that's not yet a reality.

**Mr Murdoch:** You're ahead of yourself.

**Mr Conway:** Actually, that reminds me of Darcy McKeough's line about Michael Cassidy. He used to refer to Michael as the member for Ottawa and The Islands, but that was another story. The member for St Catharines on our side, and the member from Kingston, are two people who have had considerable experience in local government. My friend Bradley never tires; though he has been long removed from the council chamber in St Catharines, he tells us constantly about the municipal rhythm, about the importance of local government and what on a given day the finance committee of St Catharines city council might be thinking about a government initiative. I was interested tonight to hear his observations about Bill 86, although I thought the member for St Catharines did widen the scope of debate somewhat.

There is, of course, the member for Grey-Owen Sound, who has had probably one of the most colourful careers in local government in the modern era, that is, at least if Michael Valpy is to be believed. It's too bad we've got Mr Murdoch from Grey-Owen Sound here now, because it means that Michael Valpy and the Globe and Mail aren't able to tell us, on at least a monthly basis, Bill, about the planning decisions that have been made in that part of the western peninsula. There was a time when the Globe columns were replete with the latest of Bill Murdoch's decision-making, antiseptic, evenhanded, as it always was, according to Mr Valpy.

**Mr Bradley:** Bill has been busy squiring the leader of the Reform Party around his riding.

**Mr Conway:** That, I think, is out of order, Madam Speaker. I am not about to engage in that kind of partisan talk at so late an hour. But I do want to make this observation: that I think it can be fairly said that in Ontario, over a long period of time, we have managed in the main to provide ourselves and our communities with relatively good local government, from the famous Baldwin act of 1849 through many revisions. I don't want to excite the member for Perth, who I know, and rightly, thinks some of us are a little too antique in our interests.

We've got, in this province, quite a good record in local government matters. It is not a perfect record. We have made some very significant mistakes, and it is interesting to look back at some of the mistakes. I was part of a government that reorganized the largest urban community in Ontario, and I'm not at all convinced, as I believe the current government is not convinced, that some of the restructuring of Metropolitan Toronto back in 1987-88 in fact produced the kind of results that the planners imagined. As a former Minister of Education, I



can tell you that the architects of the school boundary reforms of the mid-to-late 1960s would, if they were here today, admit that there was some considerable success but there was some real perversity in some of the downstream consequences. No one set out to produce unintended or perverse consequences, but we got them.

I'm going to return very briefly to one of my favourite little studies, and I'm glad my friend from Oxford is here. I remember that a few years ago I was going off to a seminar about local government, and I said, as I sometimes like to say, "Have there been any successes?" I know there has been lots of difficulty.

I say to the current government caucus, I don't think there has ever been a more highly regarded member of this Legislature than the late James N. Allan. Jimmy Allan was for 25 years the member for Haldimand-Norfolk, a very highly regarded local member, local dairyman, I believe. He was Minister of Highways but he was Minister of Finance. Jimmy Allan was one of the great people of not only the Tory party in government but of the Legislature generally.

2230

Jimmy Allan went down to defeat in 1975 because his friend Bill Davis got it wrong in terms of local government reform. There were lots of people, including many Liberals, who couldn't believe that the local reaction to miscalculated restructuring could be so profound and so deep as to catch Jimmy Allan in the general election of 1975, but he was caught and he was defeated. That's just one example of the political price that can be paid when the central planners and their political masters at Queen's Park, or in some cases nationally, get it wrong.

So it was that when I asked the question of someone a few years ago whether there were any success stories — because for a long time around this place "regional government" was really one of the dirtiest phrases, one of the most pejorative phrases, one of the most electric phrases you could inject into a debate. Most people's experience with regional government — municipal reform, restructuring, call it what you will — of the late 1960s and early 1970s was profoundly controversial and significantly negative. Against that backdrop, I asked, "Is there any place in Ontario where there was a success story?" I forget who it was, but someone said: "There's a new book out by a fellow down at the University of Western Ontario. You should read that book because it talks about a success story." Here it gets a bit local for my friend. It's *Restructuring an Ontario County: The Oxford Achievement*, by Eric Beecroft. It's a very interesting little book published by the department of political studies at the University of Western Ontario.

It is a very interesting book to read, because it talks about what worked, it talks about what didn't work. It highlights some very able local leadership, a significant part of the local leadership being a willingness of people in places like Tillsonburg and Ingersoll and Woodstock and Dereham — have I got that right? — to stand up to the late John White and say: "No. I don't care what they're telling you down at Queen's Park, it's wrong." To give Harry Parrott his due, the then Conservative member for Oxford and a minister, Harry stood with the local

folks and said, "The local people have it right and the central planners in Toronto are wrong on that point."

That's a fascinating story in here about these local people who took charge of it themselves, gave it their direction, hired their consultant. Interesting: their consultant was a young fellow named Brian Turnbull, now mayor of Waterloo, I think. Is Brian still the mayor of Waterloo?

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** Yes, he is.

**Mr Conway:** A very able fellow, a Conservative candidate provincially in North Waterloo in 1971, as I recall. Turnbull provided very effective leadership to that community. He was a consultant, not for John White in Queen's Park; he was a consultant to good, local political leadership in Oxford county.

As I say, the interesting thing about this little book is the number of occasions when there was a very real clash and where the local politicians in Oxford county, with their consultant, dug in their heels and said, "We believe we are right and we're not backing down, because if this is going to work it has to be this way." One of the big fights — interesting — was about water and sewer. It sounds really mundane. I don't know anything about water and sewer in Ostrander or Saltford, or Ingersoll for that matter, but I'll tell you, these people did, and when push came to shove, the local MLA-minister stood with his people.

A fascinating story. You read it and say, this is so trite. There's nothing in it that's breathtaking. It's all kind of matter of fact — except, apparently, it didn't happen in too many places, and we all I think know why: "Oh well, there's some big government grant. Let's hire a consultant. We'll get that good Charlie Harnick. He's a good guy and he comes highly recommended by somebody I know in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Charlie's a heck of a nice guy" — an imaginary Charlie Harnick, you understand. But in many of these cases, apparently, the consultant to do the local work is really the agent of the central power. The local leadership is not there, for whatever reason. Anyway, it's a very interesting little book about one of the few restructurings that worked. I repeat, the evidence seems to be that most of them didn't work.

I'm also reminded, when I reflect on this, about one of the fundamental issues in local government, and that is our ongoing ability to recruit to the Chatham city council, to the Dover township council, to the Sebastopol township council, to the Pembroke city council men and women who are going to do as Dalton McGuinty I thought said so eloquently here today: give of themselves in community service for a job that is often very thankless. I think one of the aspects of the success of our very positive tradition of local government is that, again, in the main we have been successful and able to do that.

I've never served on local council, but I've got to tell you, I represent the largest county in Ontario: Renfrew. There are 36 municipalities. It is 3,000 square miles. From Arnprior in the east to Deux Rivières in the north-east it is about 100-and-how-many miles? Well, in kilometres, it's at least 160 kilometres up the Ottawa River. Its average depth — from Pembroke out to Barry's Bay is 90 kilometres, out to Palmer Rapids is 110. The county



seat is in Pembroke, so to go to a county meeting is to drive, for many of these people, from downtown Toronto out to Collingwood or almost to Woodstock. Think about that. On a snowy night in January or a rainy night in May, after a full day's work, I'll tell you, that is real commitment. We have got to, in a greater way than we have been doing in recent times, honour and respect the men and women who make that commitment.

I am deeply concerned, quite frankly, in recent months about how fashionable it has become for people — and I have to say this — particularly some people on the treasury bench in this government, in the cabinet, to disparage local politicians. It's becoming fashionable. We have Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act. Well, that's an act of self-flagellation respecting provincial MLAs. Let's set that aside for the moment, but let us just observe the tendency. But I have been listening carefully around the circle over the last number of months to just how willing some very prominent Conservative cabinet ministers are, and their minions are, to disparage local politicians.

Let me be the first to admit that there are some local politicians, as there are and have been provincial politicians, as there are and have been national politicians, who do no credit to our trade, our profession. As a matter of fact, there's a very interesting new book by a fellow named William Weintraub called *City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and '50s*, published by McClelland and Stewart. It's a very interesting book to read. It talks about the bawdy, brawling quality of civic politics in the then largest metropolis in Canada. It gives a very good insight into the operational attitudes and ethics of one Camillien Houde.

I noticed particularly the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay when my friend Bradley was a while ago talking about ethics at the local level, and I saw some eyebrows raised elsewhere. I'm going to tell you, you read the Weintraub book — I know it's a little bit of history, but not that far removed — and it certainly would not make you very comfortable about the way some people practised politics at the local level.

2240

You know, it is not that many years ago that my old friend Merle Dickerson, the now deceased former mayor of North Bay — do you remember that, Bill? Remember the trial, the conviction?

**Mr Gerretsen:** Which one? Which trial?

**Mr Conway:** Well, we shall not speak ill of the dead, but that's not that long ago, and that was a very public trial. It is interesting that after the convicted former mayor returned, he was re-elected. That's not some far-distant precinct in Alabama that you'd see on 60 Minutes; that was North Bay, Ontario, in the 1970 and 1980s. That's not ancient history.

I want to come back to my primary concern, and that is the tendency that is developing to trash people who serve at the local level by creating the impression that they're all a bunch of profligates, that they're just looking for ways to pad expense accounts and fill their day with committee meetings. I think we are going to pay a very real price for the propagation of that attitude.

**Hon Ms Mushinski:** You didn't say that once, did you?

**Mr Conway:** The czarina of culture asks rather loudly, "Who said such a thing?" Her hearing, her auditory skills, perhaps need the kind of refinement that her cultural instinct has been developing here in the last few months.

I simply want to say that you do not have to be very acute or very astute to get the message, and that's a message that I think we've got to stop propagating.

Yes, we should censor people who are up to no good. There are elements of this bill — the member for Dovercourt is here, and I'm glad he is. It's easy for me to say — I'm a bumpkin from the rural hinterland — but I have wondered for years how it is that in a place —

**Mr Christopherson:** What does that make Murdoch?

**Mr Conway:** Now, that is a good interjection.

Seriously, when I see school board trustees, even in so great and so powerful a place as old York, paying themselves the near equivalent of a federal member's salary, I ask myself, need it be so?

**Mr Gerretsen:** How do I get to be a trustee?

**Mr Conway:** No, I do not think that is an appropriate response, I say to my friend from Kingston. That, in my view, is not as it should be. It is too bloody much money to be paying a school trustee, because I don't believe — and although I'm sure it sounds like it, I'm not here to disparage my friend the cardinal from Dovercourt. But ask yourself the question, are Toronto school trustees the near equivalent of an MP? I don't think so.

**Mr Silipo:** It wasn't much of a ministry then.

**Mr Conway:** He says, "It wasn't much of a ministry then." That may be a fair point, but I just think that sets a bad example and sends a wrong signal, just as I think we set a bad example and send an even worse signal to all of those hardworking farmers and labour people and housewives and students who serve on councils in my county. In the main, they're the best deal we've got. Have you any idea what it's like — I know some of you do — to be a municipal councillor in a rural township in Renfrew? I don't know what they get paid; they get paid some money. I know that. But I tell you, most of them are just volunteer community workers. They get called in the middle of the night about everything from "Where's the snowplow" to "There are cattle loose down the concession road" to "The hydro line is coming down in the ice storm." It is an incredible performance that most of them provide, and they don't get paid very much money.

Now we talk about better local government, and what we intend in many of these places is that we are going to, yes, probably consolidate. We are going to have fewer of these people. They are going to be centralized. They are undoubtedly going to require some more staff because, you see, the functions won't go away. If you're Doug Rollins and you live up in Mayo township in north Hastings, the arrival of the school bus, the inability of the oil truck to get in to put fuel into the bloody barn or your house is an issue that faces the nation every day. There's no TTC and there's no Alan Tonks up front or Paul Godfrey behind the scenes to pull the wires to make it happen like that.

**Hon Ms Mushinski:** No Patti Starrs either.

**Mr Conway:** Pardon me? Patti Starr? Where is Patti Starr, you ask? She's having lunch with Alan Eagleson.



I say to the czarina of all culture that is Ontario, mind your Ps and Qs or you might encourage me to tell you more about Patti Starr than you ever wanted to know, and I might even do so in a way that would make my friend the minister of justice seated before you blush.

But back to my point. These are extremely good, community-minded people. I'm not saying there can't be some change. In fact, a number of things here I like. I like some of the ceilings on salaries. I like some of the changes about making elections easier. I don't have some of the concerns some others might have. I am a technopeasant, but I'm sure there are ways we can apply modern technology to reasonably assist our democracy.

I'm a little reluctant maybe to raise this. Much has been said about our party convention on the weekend and I think people rightly make the point that it was not exactly an organizational success, but as I said to some of my Tory friends earlier, the last time I was in that arena for a political convention was, as it happened, in 1971. It was a great convention.

A very good friend of mine was a very active Tory. I happened to be in Toronto and he said, "Why don't you come over and see some of the action?" I remember going in there and the great to-do was: "What are these voting machines about? Where did Alan Eagleson get these electronic voting machines that will not work?" I think there was a five-hour delay while Windy O'Neill's Liberal voting machines were replaced by better manual Tory know-how.

**Mr Bradley:** Was Alan Eagleson the president?

**Mr Conway:** Alan Eagleson was the president of the Conservative Party; he was president for about 10 years, as I recall. But the point I want to make —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** No, my time is running down.

The point I want to make, because it concerns local democracy, is I think it is an amazing tribute to 2,500 citizens that they would come, many of them from a great distance, to old muddy York here last week and they would, frustrated though many of them were, for 15 hours dedicate themselves to an important process. I don't say that because I'm a Liberal. I'm quite confident that if they were Conservative or New Democratic delegates, they would have probably done the same, and you see, I think that speaks well about the way our democracy works.

I saw a US election here a few weeks ago. They registered the lowest voter turnout since 1924, less than 50%. Anybody remember the number? I think it was 48 or 49.

Provincially and nationally we do substantially better than that, and for those people around this place whose primary interest is suburban New Jersey and what magic is going on there, I hope we're not going to buy some American package that is supposed to improve our democracy in a way that resembles theirs, because while I don't want to be too boastful and I don't think we Ontarians in some critical respects have much to learn from the American republic on some of these matters, particularly around local government. We have lots to learn from the Americans, and I'm not here to engage in any kind of xenophobia, but when you look at our local

democracy, our participation rates, and yes, notwithstanding what I said a while ago, our ethics at the local level, if you watch the Buffalo evening news, there's always somebody under indictment in Erie county.

**Mr Bradley:** Lackawanna.

**Mr Conway:** In Lackawanna or wherever. We're not pure and we've had our problems, but in relative or comparative terms, I think we're in not bad shape. We can improve and we must improve.

I simply say that local government, particularly in my part of rural Ontario, depends on people in and of the community, feeling that they have a role and an opportunity to do something meaningful. Again, back to the Beecroft study about Oxford county, another one of the big fights was about representation: What was an appropriate balance between the rural and the urban interest?

2250

God help these people that they should have been here for the debate about Bill 81. God help these people that they should have ever encountered the current member from Scarborough-Canadian Tire, who tells people in Rainy River, "As far as I can tell, the only difference between Rainy River and the lower Rouge River Valley is the weather." Think about it. It's breathtaking.

I don't profess to understand the intricacies of the Golden Mile in the czarina's borough or city of Scarborough, but I'm telling you, it is my view that there is not adequate understanding about the way local democracy works at the rural level.

I was at Remembrance Day services in many of my small communities and one of the things that concerned me greatly was the number of very good people in local government who are counting down the weeks until they sign off and say goodbye because they're just not prepared to do it any more.

Someone once asked Pierre Trudeau why he was in politics, the millionaire son of privilege —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** Well, that's essentially the line.

Trudeau said — I saw the quote the other day — quoting Plato, "We must understand that if we choose not to engage in the business of civic responsibility, then we must as citizens in a society be willing to be governed by people less able than ourselves." It sounds a bit —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Conway:** People laugh, but —

**Ms Lankin:** Well, it's happened. It's here is Ontario. It's arrived.

**Mr Conway:** It's easy to say that, but think about it. I'm just reporting from the field and I'm talking about some people I know in my community who I really respect for what they do and have done, and when those people tell me they're leaving because they're not doing it any more and they're not doing it for a variety of reasons that give me pause about some of the reforms that not just the current government but other governments have offered with good hope but again with some unintended consequences, I ask myself the question: Who next? Who's going to do all of this?

I hear, for example, people including some members of the assembly saying, "I think it would be a good thing if we sort of took apart school boards and transferred a



whole bunch of these functions to municipalities." There are some rearrangements that I think are possible. I've been asking some people in my area, good local politicians, and I'm telling you there is no unanimity. I'm not meeting very many local reeves and councillors who want the phone ringing about the school bus routes. I'm not saying that there aren't some, but I'm not seeing any rush to that responsibility.

So we have to, I think, as we look at better local government, look at what we've got, look at the culture in which this is developed, understand that distance and rural environments are important, that the best government is the government provided closest to those people who are in receipt of the service and try to balance those requirements with some of the obvious pressures that this or any government faces.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Kormos:** Once again, and most eloquently, concern about the very nature of what it means to be involved in politics at the local level has been addressed by Mr Conway —

**Ms Churley:** The member for Renfrew North.

**Mr Kormos:** The member for Renfrew North, known to his constituents as Mr Conway. This is what this government really fails to understand. This government doesn't understand what it means in communities like Welland and Thorold for people to want to participate at local levels of government, for people who look to the province with its taxation powers to provide that modest level of support for the building and the maintenance of infrastructure. Now they're confronted by a government that has no regard for local governance, that very much wants to impose — I said before and others have said the same and I'll repeat it again — almost a Soviet style, that sort of centralism, that wants to impose its will from Queen's Park on diverse municipalities across the province, and that wants to erode the stature and status of local government.

This government has as an agenda two very specific things: One, driven by its commitment to a tax break for the very richest in this province, it's engaging in an orgy of privatization that is designed to transfer over to the private sector the vast majority of things that are currently owned or within the realm of public ownership. Part of the process of achieving that goal is to attack and disintegrate local government, be they school boards, be they hydro-electric commissions, be they municipal councils. I say that the folks in Welland-Thorold and, I trust, across the province won't stand for it.

**Mr Hardeman:** Thank you to the member for Renfrew North for what I think was support for the bill and some kind comments or some other comments on other parts of municipal restructuring. I would just like to thank him for bringing up the restructuring of Oxford county and to point out that indeed that was a success in 1975. But I think there's some confusion over whether in fact it was the local politicians standing up and saying they would not do what others suggested, or whether in fact it was a compromise where we had forward-thinking and compromising politicians who could see there was a future in restructuring local government.

I think the member spoke to the issue of the sewer and water, and it was one of the biggest issues in that debate, but in fact the end result was that the legislation did what was suggested by the consultant and the advice from Queen's Park that sewer and water should be the responsibility of the upper-tier government. To accommodate the needs of the local people, it was entrenched in legislation that they were allowed to put that back to the local municipalities for its operation. I would point out that they are presently in the process of taking that back up to the upper tier to administer it in a more cost-effective manner.

I also want to say that the member suggested there was a situation where we needed equal representation for the rural and the urban. I want to point out, as you read the book, you will find that the representation turned out that way because it is representation by population. At the time of restructuring, it was approximately one representative for every 4,000 to 5,000 people. That applied to both the rural and the urban people. I think it is a success story and we would wish that many more municipalities would see fit to do that.

**Mr Bradley:** I want to compliment the member on this speech and for recalling historically the imposition of regional government in many places in Ontario, including regional Niagara. It was as popular as a skunk at the proverbial garden party when it was implemented in the Niagara region and was seen as a duplication of local government. Over the years, the member would know, at least there's been an evolution which has taken place, where there's been a better delineation of powers between the region and the individual area municipalities so that much of the duplication that used to be there, to the credit of both levels has been removed.

Nevertheless, the member for Renfrew North will be interested to know that some of the proponents of one metro government in Niagara are none other than some Tories I know who would like nothing better than to get rid of the local councils. What you find is that the people of Port Colborne would prefer an individual from Port Colborne dealing with matters of strictly a local nature within the confines of that municipality, just as a person in St Catharines is annoyed when a person from Wainfleet has more control over a local road or local issue than a councillor locally elected. So, I caution the government not to move into Niagara, as I said in the first place, closing hospitals holus-bolus with the chattering classes somehow agreeing to this and the rest not agreeing to it, and the same could be said of regional government.

2300

Before I conclude my remarks, I'm wondering if someone from the Ministry of Environment is here to determine whether the member for Rexdale has violated any provincial regulations and has a certificate of approval for the pile of paper that is now beside his desk.

**Mr Martin:** I want to say that the member for Renfrew North has presented some really important ideas here this evening, as is his style. He brings an historical perspective that many of us do not have the luxury of having access to because we haven't been here as long as he has. I think it's important that we hear from and listen



to members such as Mr Conway. He made a speech here a few weeks ago about another bill about which I feel particularly strongly and I'm very concerned because of the impact it will have on the province.

The point I want to make is that it's really important that we have an opportunity, as people given responsibility by the folks who voted for us, to debate at length and to discuss in a way that calls for mutual exchange of ideas and listening and understanding so that what we're doing here by way of this bill and Bill 81 and the so many other bills that we're having to look at because of the agenda of this government is fundamental and large and is going to have tremendous impact on the way that we do things in this province. It's important that we not rush them through, that we not make decisions in haste, that we take our time, because these bills are deserving of the kind of presentation and debate and discussion and ideas that the member for Renfrew North has presented to us here tonight.

The fact that this government is willing to go to the people and spend upwards of \$48 million on a referendum on casinos and on bills such as this one and Bill 81 and the so many other bills that are going to affect directly and in major ways the everyday life of communities and people and families in this province and not be willing to take the time to do it properly is disgraceful and needs to be challenged and needs to be said. I think the member for Renfrew North does that quite well.

**The Speaker:** Responses?

**Mr Conway:** Again, very quickly, I cite the Oxford example not in any particular way, but I just look back on the last major round of municipal reform. It didn't work nearly as well as had been intended. If we look at a case like Oxford, it did work. Let's look carefully at why it worked. One of the reasons it worked, apparently, was there was strong local political leadership that saw the matter through based on good local political judgement.

I resent the disparagement of the local politicians because, while they're not all perfect, they are accountable, and to the extent that they get away with bad behaviour, it is a failure of ourselves as a community not to exact a higher level of accountability. I'll say this: If Arnott is my reeve, I can talk to him, I can complain to him, and yes, I can vote against him. That's a lot more than I can do about some consultant or some bureaucrat that's buried in the bowels of some tower in Winnipeg, Toronto or Ottawa. We've got to continue an environment where people of all walks of life, in all communities, large and small, are willing and feel it worth their time and while to make a contribution as civic leaders.

A second and final point is that whatever our plans — I mentioned positively Pierre Trudeau. In a more negative way, he weaved schemes that were wonderful theoretical constructs that absolutely failed in terms of the delivery of what was intended. Jim Fleck and that crowd here 25 years ago did a version of the same. So, I simply ask, who could be opposed to better local government? We all want it, in Renfrew and in Etobicoke. Let us make sure that if that is what we want, we deliver to a reasonable extent what looks like and what feels like good government. That's my point. Enough said.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Christopherson:** I appreciate the opportunity to join in the discussion and the debate on Bill 86. The first thing I'd like to do is to simply state for the record that, given all the speeches we have to listen to, it's always an enjoyment to listen to the member for Renfrew North.

When I first came to this place some six years ago, I was always keenly interested when the former Treasurer and one-time leader of the Liberal Party spoke, Mr Bob Nixon, and, as a new member trying to understand the historical culture of this place and the province in a way that I never had before, always enjoyed particularly his historical reflections and always learned from that. I think that has now been passed on to the member for Renfrew North, and I think he does a great service to all who care about why we have many of the situations, both good and bad, that we do and what some of the lessons are that we can learn from history. I wanted to say that, because consistently his speeches continue to provide that kind of education, certainly for me.

The other thing I want to mention is that, for people who might possibly, although I doubt many, still be staying with us at some few minutes after 11, if one were to watch this evening and the ensuing midnight sittings that happen in the last two weeks of the session, you begin to see why it's not really that productive for us to do that around the clock. I understand at one time on a fairly regular basis this Legislature would sit until 10 o'clock or midnight. For various reasons, both solid and liquid, it was determined that wasn't the wisest thing in the world to do. If you look at the fatigue of members around here and the pressing schedules that all members have, I think it's fair to say that the public business isn't necessarily served by the longer hours, certainly not on a regular basis.

Having said all of that, I want to get into the issue of Bill 86. There is much, I would say, to support in Bill 86, certainly the idea that municipalities have come into their own, that there isn't the need to be treated as a child of the province, which is the way municipalities are often described. I know that during my five years on city and regional council I began to resent some of the strings that Queen's Park continued to hold and felt that they weren't necessarily important in our time. I think this bill, in modest ways, reflects that, and I'll comment on some of the details of that in a moment.

It's important to understand that municipalities are not what they once were when the original concepts of the laws we now have around governing municipal councils were created. Of course, as everyone knows, municipalities have no status in the Constitution. In fact, it's been a position of AMO for quite some time and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the FCM, the federal body of municipalities, that they have some constitutional standing. I don't know if that has any great takeup these days, but it's there. Without that constitutional existence, as the province has and certainly a national government has, municipalities have been very much at the whim of the government of the day here at Queen's Park.

If you think about some of the things that went on — that's why I mentioned the comments of the member for Renfrew North — if you look at some of the things that



have happened in the past, I think it made a great deal of sense that that happened. Certainly, the kind of media scrutiny — although it's not necessarily always a positive contribution, on balance we're better with it than without it — that exists now in no way, shape or form existed in the past.

In fact, I can remember being on Hamilton city council and listening to some of the veterans who'd been on for decades or talking to people who had been aldermen in the 1930s and 1940s and 1950s. I was told that it would be quite unusual, when they went into an in camera session, meaning they were to discuss something that was done behind closed doors — a personnel matter, a legal matter, selling or buying of real estate, things where there were legitimate reasons to do it behind closed doors — rather than actually moving in camera, because the only people who were at the meeting were some of the media representatives, and they were just one of the guys, because they were all guys, the mayor of the day would simply say: "You guys won't report any of this, will you? We'll just quietly go into an in camera," and they would agree. Certainly I don't believe they were any less professional in their time. You have to take things in their historical context, and in that time that was the way business was done. They would do that; they would put down their pens, probably lean back, light up a cigarette and listen but not take any particular note of what was happening and wouldn't report on anything. It would be a frosty day in hell before that sort of thing would happen now. That's an example of the way things were done.

2310

I know that at the Hamilton Club on the corner of James and Main in downtown Hamilton, in the heart of my community, in the heart of my riding, much of the real business of city council was done. The deals were cooked up and cut there and then they walked across the street, over to city hall and went through the formalities. That's to some degree not unlike caucusing that happens now and the deals that are cut, but there was clearly a system of those who were in control of that community and they made sure that control was maintained all the way through. We see that in the minutes reflected through the way things were debated and how much time or, more important, the lack any real debate on a lot of important issues, particularly things that had the interest of the business community, which obviously wielded the greatest amount of power.

There have been obviously a lot of changes since then. The idea that we would move towards other means of voting, such as phoning and the Internet, while somewhat disconcerting because they're so different from the past, I think are important, because it does allow us to reach into the future, it does let us acknowledge that the world is changing around us. As much as there are important traditions that are worth keeping and building on and not letting go of, politics has to change and the business of governing has to change. I don't agree with some of the broader sweeps of change that this government brings in, such as its overreliance on referenda and other such populist things, and the holus-bolus turning over of all decision-making down to the lowest level, the local level, which is the closest level, the level that is, if this is

considered to be far away, lowest in terms of being close to the people. I'm going to comment on that in a moment too.

I think that's an important measure. Certainly, the idea that we no longer post voters' lists on telephone poles and hydro poles makes an awful lot of sense, particularly for some people who are living on their own and have privacy reasons that cause them to not want their address and their name and the fact that they live alone to be published. I think they're entitled to that privacy. The idea that we would move to a common enumeration makes a great deal of sense. That's a cost-cutting measure.

By the way, none of these things is revolutionary. They're not all that new. I suspect that the matters I've just raised would have been done by any government that's in power. That's just my speculation. This is the government that's doing it; you will get the credit for it; that's the way it needs to be. But I think it's fair to say that there's nothing too insightful or creative or new about it. These ideas have been there and have been worked on inside the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for quite some time and certainly have been talked about by an awful lot of councils.

When we talk about the amount of power however that is being given over to the minister, I begin to part company with some of the small but important positive measures that are contained in Bill 86. I want to spend the balance of my time commenting on that.

Bill 86 is a very large bill, as I mentioned in a two-minute response earlier. It's 153 pages. That is an unusually long bill, for those of us who deal with these every day. This is a very substantive bill. It has a lot of things in it. When you look at the explanatory notes, virtually everything, save and except one matter, deals with councils, their structure, governance, elections, matters of that ilk. Then, out of the clear blue, you have this issue of section 79, which is dropped in here and stands out like a sore thumb.

It's part XV, it starts on page 70, and it's headed "Community and Public Transportation." We go from a bill that talks about the structure of municipal government, elections and the like, and suddenly we're talking about transportation. The first question to be asked is, why is this not being dealt with as a standalone piece of legislation from the Minister of Transportation? Given the amount of powers he's giving himself and the concerns that some of us have about what's in here, it would make a great deal of sense that this would be a stand-alone bill and have its own time to be debated and considered in this Legislature, because I believe this could have incredibly huge, sweeping implications for communities like mine in Hamilton-Wentworth and others across the province.

The first thing that section 79 does — this is a brand-new term, by the way; this has not been used before that I'm aware of. This is new jargon: "community transportation." The definition — I know it's not always riveting to be reading directly from a bill, but it's not that long and I think it's important — says: "Community transportation' means all services and related facilities and equipment, including public transportation, used to transport,



or to facilitate, coordinate or otherwise provide for the transportation of individuals within, to or from a municipality, but it does not include" and then it gives a number of exemptions, none of which are relevant to the comments that I'm going to make.

First of all, I had an opportunity to ask the parliamentary assistant earlier about an interpretation of this — and I'm not a lawyer, but that I took from this; that's why I wanted to ask him before I made comments publicly — and he's advised me that if indeed I am correct in my interpretation, that certainly was not the intent, at least that's what the parliamentary assistant is advised, and I believe that that's what he was advised. Whether or not that truly is what went on, I would say he knows no more than I. I take him off the hook in that regard, because I believe him to be an honourable member.

But the way I read this, this not only includes public transportation and the parts of private transportation that may be funded by different provincial ministries, but the way this reads it could also mean the taxicab industry in every community.

Those members who have served on councils, particularly those like myself who've served on licensing committees — in fact, I chaired our licensing committee — in fairly large urban centres, will know, particularly where you have a regulated taxi industry, that this is a very sensitive area and cab drivers do not take kindly to people who don't understand the specifics of their industry stepping in and telling them how to do their business. They understand in communities like Hamilton that there will be regulation, but they like an open process, they like to be informed, they like to have input and they like to know that the people who are making the decisions are accountable to them.

I can recall before the 1988 municipal election — I won't get into the specifics of the issue, but there was quite a scandal brewing in our community around the issuance of licence plates, which at that time were worth in the neighbourhood of \$70,000 or \$80,000 a pop. There were cab drivers in cabs lined up in parade fashion in front of city hall on a number of occasions — lights on, horns blaring, signs a-going — because they wanted to hold city hall accountable to what was going on.

I think anybody out there who has an interest in the taxicab industry ought to be getting a hold of their local government member and finding out whether that is indeed the way this is meant to be interpreted, and if it isn't, get assurances that there will be amendments to Bill 86 to specifically exclude or ensure that the language does not include the taxicab industry.

2320

Having said that, the concern about this is that this minister, just like in Bill 26, is giving himself incredible power over what he calls community transportation. Certainly one of those that have taken a leadership role in raising this issue — and I grant you, they have a vested interest, but that's fine, that doesn't deny them their democratic right to have a say; if anything, it should give them the respect that their expertise says they should get. The Amalgamated Transit Union, Canadian Council, under the leadership of Ken Foster, who is the Canadian director, have a lot of concerns about Bill 79 and what it

might mean in terms of the privatization of public transit in all our communities.

Given this government's track record on privatization and all the plans you have and what you're planning to do to public sector unions that get in the way and what you're going to do to wages and benefits, I think they have every right to be as concerned as they are in representing their members. After all, like anybody out there watching or anyone reading the Hansard, everyone's entitled to a decent standard of living and a decent income and decent benefits. This province is wealthy enough that we can do that, but the name of the game, in terms of this government, is to move in the opposite direction, because the lower the wages and the lower the benefits and the fewer the benefits, the more profit there is, which is in large part why they're doing all this privatization. As we've said on many occasions, that's why, like Mulroney, they'll make sure it's their cronies, Mike Harris's golfing cronies, that get all these public services, and with the legislation that goes with it they stand to make a lot of bucks.

What's the minister going to do that's so terribly horrific that I feel the need to make it a focus of my comments? Well, contained in a clause here — I'm going to read this again, because it's just as short as the other one — it says: "The minister may enter into an agreement with a municipality, local board, individual, corporation, firm or unincorporated association" — the minister may enter into an agreement with any of those, not all of them or one specifically but any of those — "to provide, facilitate, coordinate or restructure community transportation."

That's powerful stuff. That clause, linked with the definition of this new term "community transportation," means, as I read it — and I haven't heard the parliamentary assistant or the minister or anybody else say that this isn't true, and if it is, you've got your chance when I'm done in your two-minute responses to tell me I'm wrong. But as I understand this, what it means is that the minister can enter into an agreement with either the municipality, a local board, any individual, anybody, his closest pal. We already know that the Minister of Education hired a former employee and a good pal to do just a review. This is to take power.

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** For \$1.

**Mr Christopherson:** I hear one of the government backbenchers saying, "For \$1." All the more reason that the average working person ought to be concerned, because how many working people can take on any kind of full-time responsibility for a buck a year? The wealthy can. If you've got \$10 million in the bank, you've got the luxury of saying, "Yes, I'll do a public service for \$1 a year." But if you're an ordinary working stiff, you don't have that luxury. So don't throw that at me.

That means that the minister can enter into an agreement with a municipality, local board, any individual, any corporation, any firm or unincorporated association, to do what? To provide community transportation, to facilitate community transportation, to coordinate community transportation or restructure community transportation.

We already know that "community transportation" means just about everything that moves the public.



Whether it's public or private is yet to be defined. Exclude the taxicab industry, although I think you might have a tiger by the tail there. Even if you're just dealing with public transit, what this says is that the minister could — I realize I am taking an extreme, but with this government anything's possible. You told us you didn't need the powers in Bill 26 because the Minister of Health would never do those awful things, would never close hospitals, and look what the health restructuring commission is doing: blowing into community after community and shutting down hospitals. And the minister stands up and say: "I can't do anything about it. The law says the commission has that power."

Just like Bill 86, Bill 26 — they have a thing for bills that end in "6" giving power — gave all that power to the minister. It's his law, it's his commission. To stand up and say, "I can't take responsibility because I am just following the law," is a load.

**Mr Bradley:** A load of what?

**Mr Christopherson:** I'll get thrown out if I say a load of what, and I want to finish my speech, but I think people know what I mean.

What this now does is that it will provide the minister the ability to give his closest crony or a consulting firm or a local business — anything he wants or anybody he wants — the ability to come into my community of Hamilton-Wentworth or any other community across the province and absolutely take over control of the public transportation system. That's what it says. The minister can then do an agreement with these people or corporations or entities and they can provide, facilitate, coordinate or restructure community transportation. And one wonders why the Amalgamated Transit Union might be a little bit concerned about what's going to happen to their members and their collective agreements?

We just went through a short strike in Hamilton-Wentworth with our HSR drivers. Fortunately, there was a resolution found fairly quickly. I am sure that both sides would have preferred to get more of what they wanted at the bargaining table, but at the end of the day there was an agreement that was ratified by a vast majority of that membership, so that service has continued. We're very proud of the HSR in Hamilton, yet there were threats out there. I won't say by whom or who they might be affiliated to, but there were certain threats and murmurings made by some regional council members: "Gee, if we don't get the kind of collective agreement we need, we might have to look at privatization." It's always the threat, but with this government it's more than a threat. It's a real possibility. With Bill 86 and with this section 79, it's all there to do.

I would like to hear the parliamentary assistant stand up and say, first of all, that I'm wrong. If I am, fair enough, let's have that debate; I'd like to hear that. If I'm not wrong but I'm exaggerating, then let him say that. But I would remind him that that's the same answer we got when we were worried about the powers that Bill 26 gave to certain ministers such as the Minister of Health and the restructuring commission and all the things that could happen. We were told, "Oh, no, you're just fear-mongering again."

We know that this government and the Minister of Transportation have no commitment to public transit, just like they have no commitment to the environment. That's been proven time and time again. And it's for bloody certain that they've got no concern about workers and, God forbid, those workers who have the audacity to join a union. We know how you feel about those things.

So I would say that those workers in communities like mine and people who care about public transit and people who care about its relationship to the environment and our ability to build healthy, sustainable communities for the future ought to be bloody scared about this clause. They ought to be asking serious questions about why it was slipped into such a large bill, why suddenly this transportation issue with all these powers was slipped in here. Why isn't it a standalone bill? Why aren't we having a debate solely on the question of public transportation and who will make decisions about the future, of what it ought to be and the form it ought to take and who controls it and for what purpose? For the public good as the top priority, or other considerations as a top priority and public consideration only something that comes afterwards?

**2330**

It's interesting to note that the who does what to whom committee endorsed the community transportation action plan that our government brought about, which was a completely different direction. It talked about coordination of public transportation by giving responsibility for the planning back to communities. As I understand it, they endorsed that on July 2. They said that was the way to go. But again, this government doesn't want to listen to anybody or anything that talks about an agenda that's different from their own.

At the end of the day, what do we have? We have a huge bill that makes a lot of changes to the way our local governments are structured and who controls them and how they're shaped and who makes those decisions, and gives more control for financial planning and management, for using foreign markets etc to put bonds on, things of this nature. All those things are good. Municipal councils, certainly in the larger areas, have the technical expertise, and computers and other things have made it easier, so it's no longer a question of Queen's Park having to provide all the expertise necessary because municipal councils either couldn't or wouldn't use it.

We know that the upside of local councils is that they're the closest to the people and they feel the issues strongest. On the downside, they're also the ones who can feel the strongest pressure on a day-to-day basis, because the members don't leave and go to another city, like we do here in Queen's Park, or further yet at the national level, where you're off to the nation's capital and you're not facing people day after day after day and hearing the pressure. That is sometimes not good in many cases, certainly around some zoning issues, which is why we took such great exception to many of your changes to land use planning, your using the bumper sticker phrases that "Smaller government is always better" and "The government that's the closest to the people is always the one that's right."



Well, that's not always the case, and many times it has been Queen's Park and the Ministry of the Environment, other ministries and, yes, even the OMB that have stepped in and brought the kind of principled decision-making to important things like land use that need to be the priorities and not the immediate pressures that are there.

I admit quite openly that as an alderman I've been on both sides of those kinds of issues. Such is the nature of municipal politics. Those of us who have been there know it is a somewhat different creature from what we have in the parliamentary system, which is structured far more along the lines of parties — although we certainly see a lot of that at the municipal level also.

In closing, I want to emphasize the fact that our caucus has a great deal of difficulty with what's happening in section 79 for a whole host of reasons, most importantly the issue of public transit and who really will be well served and who will guarantee that the public interest is the priority if it's one of the minister's cronies or one of the Premier's cronies who is appointed to be the new emperor of public transportation in all our communities. Hell, they don't even have to come from the community that's mentioned. You could have somebody take over, have absolute power over the public transportation system in Hamilton-Wentworth, who has never even been there.

There's nothing in here — now, the parliamentary assistant may say, "There are going to be regulations." I don't know. I'm curious to hear what his answers are to all this and I'll be listening very intently. But certainly your intent is to provide the minister with those kinds of powers. If that wasn't your intent, will the parliamentary assistant today, on behalf of his minister and the government, make a commitment that you will narrow the power you're giving the minister, or at the very least narrow the power you're giving all these authorities and entities and people that you're about to do with section 79 as a part of Bill 86?

I want to tell you, parliamentary assistant, there are an awful lot of people who care about public transit, who care about the environment, who care about decent wages, decent working conditions, and your whole agenda around privatization. I say to you very directly that all of those things come to play in section 79. This government has to answer for section 79 today and to the end of this term, just as they have to under Bill 26 as they're shutting down hospitals. We worry you'll be shutting down public transportation systems, and that's equally unacceptable.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments? The member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** I think it goes that way first, but it's up to you.

I thought the speech was a good one. I want to say that. The member brought out some of the weaknesses of the bill and some of the strengths of the bill. He was very fairminded that way. I'm concerned about some of the definitions he's concerned about, now that he has raised them, particularly the issue related to transportation and what might well happen with the transportation system in any particular city or any municipality, and how that might be used as a lever to pry concessions from people

who are seeking to have their employment conditions what they would like to see them be.

I was wondering whether the member simply didn't have time to bring in the issue of the tax cut in his particular presentation and how the government is going to have to borrow \$5 billion a year and add that to the provincial debt so it can give a tax cut to the most wealthy in our society. I know the member probably didn't have the time to mention that, but he did mention some of his Conservative friends in Hamilton. I'm wondering what they think of that, because I know some of them don't mind the cutting so much, though now it's starting to hit some of the boards and commissions on which they serve on a volunteer basis. I wonder if he hears them talking about the fact that the government is going to borrow this money. A Conservative government which said the deficit was a real problem has to borrow the money. Therefore, we have bills like this coming forward, where the government is trying to find some savings simply to make up for the tax cut, perhaps cutting some corners that wouldn't be wise.

I also want to compliment the member on not flogging several books during his presentation. One of the previous speakers flogged books and gave the name of the company and the author and so on. It sounds like Peter Gzowski on Morningside when he rises to speak in this House.

**Ms Lankin:** I also want to congratulate the member for Hamilton Centre for his remarks and his contribution to the debate tonight. I think he raises a really important point as he points to parts of this bill that set out, again, broad powers the minister can take on to himself, and an unwillingness on the part of the government to fetter that by amendment and/or by clear indication of the regulatory scheme that will be set out under this bill.

Sometimes it feels like it's hard to follow this government without a program. Now that they've gone past the initial commitments in the Common Sense Revolution, they don't have a program any more. If you cut through the rhetoric that says this bill's about improving municipal government, if you cut through the rhetoric that says this is about greater autonomy and greater respect for local accountability, and actually cut to the chase in terms of what's in this bill and many others, you'll begin to see a theme that emerges.

If you look at Bill 26, you see very clearly a government that has taken broad, sweeping powers on to itself and refused — although we tried, I think valiantly, through the course of the very limited public hearings the government would allow on that huge piece of omnibus legislation — to put any limits on that.

Just look recently at the way in which they forced final closure and vote on the video lottery terminals legislation and refused to put in place any kind of restrictions. Let me tell you, I'm facing a situation in my home community where there may well be a huge mega-teletheatre that is going to be built right beside a brand-new school, a 2,000- to 3,000-seat teletheatre, a 24-hour operation right beside a public school, and I bet you there will be VLTs in that.

Here's another situation in terms of this section 79 and municipal transit — forced amalgamation; you said you



wouldn't force amalgamation — where you take the powers on to yourself. The theme is clear. It is not democratic; it is anti-democratic.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time has expired.

2340

**Mr Hardeman:** First of all, I'd just like to answer the question on community transportation. It refers to public transit, school buses, health and social service agency vehicles, intercity buses and transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities, all operating at the local level. The community transportation action program was announced by the ministries of transportation and municipal affairs and housing on August 19. It is a joint venture of five Ontario government ministries designed to offer transitional assistance to communities wishing to restructure and coordinate their local transportation services.

I just want to point out that that program would also require the inclusion of some private-sector transportation modes. In fact, there are areas where transportation for the individuals mentioned is purchased from the private sector and it requires legislation to allow those agreements to be worked out, to allow the complete coordination of transportation services within the communities.

The amendments to the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act set out a statutory definition of "community" to allow the Ministry of Transportation and other entities to enter into agreements for the purposes of restructuring and coordinating facilities or providing community transportation. That's the reason for this amendment. It is not to do what the member across the aisle would suggest. That is the sole purpose for that amendment in this legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I made a mistake and I'll correct it later on. The member for Renfrew North.

**Mr Conway:** I want to simply agree with the member for Hamilton Centre in his focus around urban transit. There is no question that in communities large and small — I live in the city of Pembroke, a small urban community of 20,000 in eastern Ontario, and there is a very great deal of concern among the riders of our local Pembroke Transit about what the Harris government policies and funding arrangements are going to mean in terms of the buses that run to that city.

The member for Durham Centre smiles broadly.

**Mr Flaherty:** That's not what they're talking about.

**Mr Conway:** They are talking about that, actually. Older people, people who don't have automobiles —

**Mr Flaherty:** I am talking about McGuinty, and you didn't support him.

**Mr Conway:** I say to the member from Durham, he would do well to listen to what I am saying as to what people are telling me about that subject. I own a car. I live in a car, so what they do to urban transit in my community really doesn't affect me, but it certainly affects a lot of people. I've been struck in recent weeks by the number of people, older people and people not so old, who've stopped me and said they are concerned about what they are reading in the local paper about the possible demise, the possible termination of our relatively

small and I think reasonably efficient Pembroke Transit. That's the first time that's ever occurred.

I see the member for Quinte here. I think he knows of what I speak — if you live in a place like Belleville or Pembroke — when a half dozen people in the space of a week or a few days stop and say, "Rollins" or "Conway, I'm concerned about what seems to be in store for urban transit and I'm really concerned that you know that if these buses are undercut or cease operation, that is going to mean a real hardship for my ability to get to work or get to the doctor or get to the grocery store." I thank the member from Hamilton for raising it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Hamilton Centre, you have two minutes.

**Mr Galt:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: When the member for Renfrew spoke, you were going to correct it later. I was wondering what your plans were to make the correction later.

**The Deputy Speaker:** After having thought of the supposed mistake I made, I hadn't made a mistake, because when I called for statements, nobody stood up except the member for St Catharines. So we'll continue the debate.

**Mr Galt:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I was standing prior to the member for Renfrew.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There's no point in having an argument. It's over. Do you agree? It's not the procedure. If there's total agreement, we'll listen to you for two minutes. Agreed.

**Mr Galt:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for recognizing me and giving me an opportunity to respond in the proper position.

To the member for Hamilton Centre, I was certainly very impressed with his presentation and certainly appreciated his comments about taking the voters lists off the local telephone poles, recognizing the importance of privacy to those who would prefer not to have their identification known and people knowing that they may live single. Anyway, I really appreciated your comments on that.

You made reference to power and more power being given centrally to the provincial government when in fact in this bill, if you look at it, the power is being given to municipalities. We're giving them the opportunity to direct themselves, to be autonomous and to be able to make decisions as to the size of their council, the ward system, who would be elected, how big their councils would be. That is the kind of thing that this bill is giving power to, not so much to the central government, such as the government of Ontario.

Something that wasn't referred to, and I think we should mention it more, happens to be the liability and taking some liability off these municipal councils. We are all familiar with the occasion where the young lad threw the motorbike over the fence and rode it in the park and injured himself and later turned around and sued the municipality because it happened to have a place where he could ride his motorbike, which was fenced off and he wasn't supposed to be there. This is the kind of liability that municipalities should not have to come up against, the nuisance kind of liability that councillors and many volunteers are very concerned about. It's because of some



of the court decisions that have been made in the past that have ended up leaving people like councillors in very vulnerable positions that I don't believe they should be left in.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Hamilton Centre, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr Christopherson:** I thank all members for their comments. To the member for St Catharines, you're right: One should never miss any opportunity to talk about the ridiculous tax cut and its cost to all of us. I appreciate his adding that to my comments.

The member for Beaches-Woodbine: Certainly if anyone in this House would understand the difference in the powers that previous ministers of Health have had versus what this government and this minister has given himself, it's the member for Beaches-Woodbine in her time as a Minister of Health and, I would say, one of the most respected and renowned Health ministers the province has ever seen. So I think there's a lot to be learned from her comments.

The member for Renfrew North talks about the importance of public transportation and what it means to the average citizen, which, as I said in my remarks, ought to be the top priority, and doesn't seem to be and won't be under section 79 of Bill 86.

The member for Northumberland says that I was wrong on the question of power, but he missed the whole point. I don't think he even once referred to section 79, which is where I was specifically talking about the issue of powers.

Now I come to the member for Oxford, the parliamentary assistant. I'm somewhat disappointed, Ernie. I asked a number of pointed questions and left myself wide open for you to come straight at me if I was wrong. I didn't hear you do that. The fact of the matter is I'm not sure what the hell you said. You kind of went around and around on me. I said to you that this section creates a new power similar to what we saw in Bill 26 with the Health Services Restructuring Commission. We've seen what they've done in Thunder Bay and in Sudbury and what they're about to do in Toronto and Ottawa and London. God forbid, they're coming into my town in the new year too.

One of the powers you're giving under clause 79 is the ability to restructure what you call "community transportation," so the fact of the matter is that you are trying to take all kinds of power unto yourself and you're going to cut, cut, cut public transportation, just like you cut, cut, cut everything else that matters in this province.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further debate?

**Mr Patten:** I'm delighted to be here at this hour, participating in this debate. I know there are thousands of people out there who are watching very carefully as to the nature of the discussion.

I have several points that I would like to make that are quite specific to the bill, but I think it's incumbent upon me to also share that there's a general pattern here that causes a number of people to be somewhat worried. I would, however, have a spirit of generosity to say that yes, I believe there are some things in here that can add to some streamlining of ways in which structures can be

reorganized to facilitate services or to perform service to people. However, the pattern has been, and this has been more concretely alluded to by numerous members, that any time you look at restructuring, what it ends up to be is a vehicle for the province to cut and find more money for its own needs. We all know what that is; that's of course the tax break.

When I see some of this legislation, I feel we have to scrutinize it and take a very close look at it. The automatic message from the government seems to be that if you streamline, that automatically will lead to more quality. I have yet to see that happen. I haven't seen it related to the environmental concerns of this government as to putting in the Environmental Protection Act a stronger sense of concern about the quality of the environment, and I'll refer to this as I address a few pieces in this legislation. I want to underline that streamlining doesn't necessarily give you quality if you place more pressure — in this case it's on the municipal governments — for lack of support from the provincial level for them to do their job.

I see the restructuring as being ways in which they can do further cutbacks, which means they will provide less service that people see as being important, will put pressure on them because you've taken away funds and provided them with a few more windows to find resources to manage their particular budgets, which they must of course do.

2350

I'd like to address a few points in Bill 86, the section that deals with municipal liability and some of the nuisance issues I referred to. I listened very carefully this evening to a number of points that have been raised by opposition members who likewise had been members of local councils or who had legal backgrounds. It seemed to me they at least raised for me cause for concern that this was not going to automatically do away with any sense of liability, but that there would need to be perhaps new definitions. In some cases we may see future squabbles on the basis of standards, but the implication would be that there would be different standards, that there would probably be lower standards, and that there would probably be different standards from municipality to municipality. Therefore, the universality of a sense of a common standard throughout various municipalities would somehow be weakened.

In Bill 86, there is the immunity for damages. I just addressed that point. There was one related to "state of repair that is reasonable in light of all the circumstances, including the road's character and location." This would be a liability that would prevent people being too quick in suing local municipalities.

I don't travel as much in my car as the member for St Catharines or the member for Renfrew North or many of the members who travel a great deal in their cars, but I have noticed a deterioration in the quality of the roadways. It would seem to me that the quality and the level of standards certainly cannot be an improvement. How would it be an improvement? All that's called for here, it seems to me, is that you pass on the responsibility from the province to the local municipality which will now



have standards they cannot keep at the moment, in spite of what the Minister of Transportation says.

I relate this back to the theme of quality, which is what I want to point out. I don't see any increased quality in the quality of roadways, maintenance or otherwise, with this bill, but a lowering of standards to allow for less quality roadways.

In the section that has been identified by numerous speakers, and it appears to still be up in the air, the definition of "community transportation," there are some things in this which on the surface appear to be good moves to provide various municipalities to share costs and integrate some of their transportation systems. We have such a system in Ottawa-Carleton. As a matter of fact it's a system that is interprovincial, so I can see the value of some of that.

However, when I see the amendments that are made to the Highway Traffic Act to allow municipalities to set standards, for example on ambulance service, I get a little worried. Not only will there necessarily be variances, which means that people in different parts of Ontario will have unequal service, but it means, I believe, that it's another opportunity to allow a municipality to move its service to the private sector and then be in a position to monitor that.

Of course, with the pressure on it with less resources to deal with, does anyone truly believe that those standards will be at the same level they are now or that they will be improved? I doubt it. If we look at the pattern of what happened with the standards related to the Environmental Protection Act, it was not an improvement. If we look at the pressure and the legislation that was brought forward on labour safety, it was not an improvement. If we look at what's happening in education, the minister talks all the time about testing and testing and testing, but where is the evidence of support to actually increase the standards in the classroom?

I want to speak on this just for one minute. I have received in my office so many letters from parents, not just from my riding but from around Ontario, because I happen to be the education critic. People know the standards and the quality in the classroom have lessened.

In every major piece of legislation, this has taken place. When you look at the pressure on the lower tier, they have already received 40%, 47% cuts, depending. So they have tremendous pressure to find new resources. They will use these new vehicles to cut service. Yes, they may cut the size of their council and they may cut some of the so-called frivolous activity, whatever that is. I don't think that exists any more in many areas; councils seem to be quite accountable to their own people. I want

to support in the future but with a caution — I see that time is running out, but I want to relate a letter that I think was rather poignant to the use of technologies. The letter is from Marjorie Fulton from my riding in Ottawa. She says:

"I write to bring to your attention a concern about amendments to the Municipal Act included in this bill.

"Bill 86 includes some provisions dealing with the accommodation of blind and visually impaired voters in municipal elections. I have some serious concern about these provisions, although legislation is needed to remove obstacles experienced by blind voters."

I was hoping I could read the whole letter, but in the interests of time I will go right to the chase of her points. She says: "Ballots used by blind voters must not be distinguishable from others' ballots during the counting. If a notched ballot is used for a blind voter, the ballots of all voters must be notched."

She refers to Section 42 and I would share this letter with the committee that will be reviewing this legislation, but she says: "Section 42 authorizes councils to conduct elections by electronic or other innovative means. This section must be subject to a mandatory requirement for accommodation of blind voters."

She finishes off by saying: "I am among those blind voters who found it necessary to file a complaint under the Ontario Human Rights Code because of the discretion exercised by the city clerk of Ottawa. I trust that these modifications will be adopted as a means of enabling Ontario's Municipal Act to serve as a model of equity, simplicity and efficiency for other provinces, in meeting the obligations imposed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

I believe Marjorie has a very important point to make for many of our citizens who are in a special needs situation. Just to what degree this bill goes to address that, I hope the committee will listen very carefully.

I see the Speaker looking at me so I will close my remarks by saying yes, it appears there are some elements of this that will streamline efforts and I applaud that. Not all things in all bills, of course, are negative from an opposition point of view. There are some things of great sensitivity. I think many members have raised those issues this afternoon and this evening. I've tried to identify a few myself and I hope that when we get to committee, the members of the committee will seriously take into consideration some of those points.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 12 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 2359.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

**Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD**

**Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell**

**Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers**

**Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries**

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller**

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Arnott, Ted	Wellington	PC	
Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre du Travail
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, deputy government House leader / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances, chef parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	parliamentary assistant (rural affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, Elinor	Oriole	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général et du ministre des Services correctionnels
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Chiarelli, Robert	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cooke, David S.	Windsor-Riverside	ND	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne</b>	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (agriculture and food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
<b>Ecker, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Janet</b>	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elliott, Brenda	Guelph	PC	
<b>Eves, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Ernie L.</b>	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	
Flaherty, Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant (environment) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Environnement) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant (tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	parliamentary assistant (energy) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Énergie) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Harnick, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Charles</b>	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
<b>Harris, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Michael D.</b>	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	
<b>Hodgson, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Chris</b>	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	
<b>Jackson, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Cameron</b>	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Seniors Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Santé
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Johnson, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon David</b>	Don Mills	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC	
Kennedy, Gerard	York South / -Sud	L	
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Laughren, Floyd	Nickel Belt	ND	
<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b>	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLean, Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b>	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b>	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b>	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L	
<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b>	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William</b>	Eglinton	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L	
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC	
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC	
<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b>	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant (small business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b>	Carleton	PC	Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC	
<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b>	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC	Speaker / Président
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC	
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b>	Markham	PC	Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Turnbull, David	York Mills	PC	chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	PC	
<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b>	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	PC	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Wettlaufer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Wildman, Bud	Algoma	ND	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b>	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b>	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND	
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant (colleges and universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ron Johnson  
Marion Boyd, Robert Chiarelli, Sean G. Conway,  
Ed Doyle, Garry J. Guzzo, Tim Hudak,  
Ron Johnson, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston,  
Gerry Martiniuk, John L. Parker, David Ramsay,  
David Tilson, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Alvin Curling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Joseph Cordiano  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Jim Brown,  
Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Joseph Cordiano,  
Alvin Curling, Brenda Elliott, Morley Kells,  
Peter Kormos, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Frank Sheehan,  
Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Ted Chudleigh  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tim Hudak  
Ted Arnott, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown,  
Annamarie Castrilli, Ted Chudleigh,  
Douglas B. Ford, Tim Hudak, Monte Kwinter,  
Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips,  
Gilles Pouliot, Joseph Spina, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Jack Carroll  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bart Maves  
Jack Carroll, Harry Danford, Jim Flaherty,  
Bernard Grandmaître, Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese,  
Bart Maves, Sandra Papatello, Lillian Ross,  
Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona,  
Len Wood, Terence H. Young  
Clerk / Greffière: Lynn Mellor

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo  
Rick Bartolucci, Bruce Crozier, Ed Doyle,  
Douglas B. Ford, Gary Fox, Michael Gravelle,  
Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren,  
Gary L. Leadston, Dan Newman, Peter L. Preston,  
Tony Silipo, Bob Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Ted Arnott  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Hastings  
Ted Arnott, Rick Bartolucci, Dave Boushy, Tony Clement,  
Carl DeFaria, Bill Grimmett, John Hastings, Ron Johnson,  
Frank Miclash, Gilles E. Morin, John R. O'Toole,  
Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John L. Parker  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tom Froese  
Elinor Caplan, Carl DeFaria, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese,  
Doug Galt, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Rosario Marchese, Margaret Marland, John L. Parker,  
R. Gary Stewart, Bill Vankoughnet, Len Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Dalton McGuinty  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mike Colle  
Marcel Beaubien, Dave Boushy, Gary Carr,  
Mike Colle, Bruce Crozier, Brenda Elliott,  
Gary Fox, Steve Gilchrist, John Hastings,  
Gerard Kennedy, Shelley Martel, Dalton McGuinty,  
Gilles Pouliot, Toni Skarica  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Smith  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Dave Boushy, John Hastings,  
Tony Martin, John R. O'Toole, Trevor Pettit,  
Sandra Papatello, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Tony Ruprecht,  
Mario Sergio, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Resources development /  
Développement des ressources**

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Barbara Fisher  
John R. Baird, Jack Carroll, David Christopherson,  
Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Dwight Duncan,  
Barbara Fisher, Steve Gilchrist, Pat Hoy,  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Bart Maves, Bill Murdoch,  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Président: Richard Patten  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Gerretsen  
David S. Cooke, Tom Froese, John Gerretsen,  
Michael Gravelle, Helen Johns, W. Leo Jordan,  
Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Julia Munro,  
Richard Patten, Trevor Pettit, Peter L. Preston,  
Lillian Ross, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.









## CONTENTS

Monday 2 December 1996

### SECOND READINGS

#### **Better Local Government Act, 1996,**

Bill 86, *Mr Leach*

Mr Crozier . . . . .	5499, 5502
Mr Bisson . . . . .	5501, <b>5503</b>
Mr Hastings . . . . .	5502, <b>5509</b> , 5512, 5524
Mr Hoy . . . . .	5502
Mr Len Wood . . . . .	5502
Mr Kormos . . . . .	5507, <b>5515</b> , 5521, 5529, 5540
Mr Flaherty . . . . .	5507
Mr Lalonde . . . . .	5508, <b>5512</b>
Ms Lankin . . . . .	5508, 5545
Mr Hardeman . . . . .	5511, <b>5521</b> , 5524, 5540, 5545
Mrs Caplan . . . . .	5512
Ms Churley . . . . .	5515
Mr Gravelle . . . . .	5515, 5520
Mr Galt . . . . .	5520, 5529, 5546
Ms Martel . . . . .	5520
Mr Bradley . . . . .	5521, 5524, <b>5525</b> , 5530, 5540, 5545
Mr Patten . . . . .	5523, 5529, <b>5547</b>
Mr Christopherson . . . . .	5524, <b>5541</b> , 5546
Mr Silipo . . . . .	5529, 5535
Mr Martin . . . . .	<b>5530</b> , 5535, 5540
Mr Carroll . . . . .	5534
Mr Gerretsen . . . . .	5534
Mr Bert Johnson . . . . .	5535
Mr Conway . . . . .	5536, 5541, 5546
Adjourned . . . . .	5548

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 2 décembre 1996

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

#### **Loi de 1996 sur l'amélioration des administrations locales,**

Projet de loi 86, *M. Leach*

M. Lalonde . . . . .	<b>5512</b>
Débat ajourné . . . . .	5548

C42 ON  
X1  
-023

Government  
Publications



No. 132A

N° 132A

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 36th Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 3 December 1996**

**Mardi 3 décembre 1996**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

**Président**  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 December 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 décembre 1996

*The House met at 1332.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### FOREST FIREFIGHTING

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** For the past year and a half we have fought vigorously against government that seems to be on a rampage as they slash or eliminate programs, remove important regional offices from the north and download financial responsibility to municipalities and the private sector in a headlong rush to find ways to pay for their foolish tax scheme.

In northern Ontario we've been forced to watch as the so-called advocate for our region, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, continues to find ways to force our cash-strapped municipalities or just individual taxpayers to take over responsibility and the financing for programs that clearly belong to the province.

The latest is that the minister now wants municipalities and other stakeholders to start paying for our forest fire protection. We know from a leaked Price Waterhouse document that the minister wants these stakeholders to pay for 40% of the cost previously funded by the province, a very substantial sum if you look at the over \$150 million spent in 1995.

We all know that the Minister of Finance will be announcing very soon the massive transfer payment cuts to the public sector, including municipalities. How could he then expect them to find \$40 to \$50 million more a year to pay for forest firefighting? But more importantly, where is the Minister of Northern Development when these issues are being discussed? We see him in the north when he wants to announce a program or two, and we're glad to see him. But, Minister, you seem to avoid us when you're taking things away. Stop playing games. Be honest with us and give us a chance to make some decisions on our own.

### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** As the public hearings on Bill 82 begin today, two important points must be raised with respect to the process. Firstly, the government did have the time to have full public hearings on these important matters. It's a shame that presenters from outside of Toronto have to come to this city when the justice committee could well have gone to those communities to hear those folks there.

It's ridiculous as well to devote only two and a half days to a public discussion of matters which will affect thousands and thousands of recipients and payors. The government has held out the false hope that if we pass

this bill tomorrow, many, many recipients will immediately receive their arrears.

The fact is that Downsview is not up and running, the fact is that staff have only recently been hired, and the fact is that the technology needed to carry out the enforcement has not even been purchased by the government yet, much less been put in place and the people trained on it. It will be months before any of the enforcement activities can go into effect, and it's unconscionable for this government to conveniently neglect to tell recipients that.

Secondly, I question whether or not the government has any intention of amending Bill 82 despite the serious concerns the NDP raised regarding collection of fees, privatization, the ability of the director to write off arrears and the opting-out provision. Last Friday my office received a memo from the family support plan describing the new intake sheets they're now going to use. At the bottom of the action sheet, the FSP staff are to check off the reason for the inquiry: late payment, arrears, enforcement or opting out. It's clear the Attorney General has already made up his mind. He's not going to change the opting-out provision. I certainly hope he's not going to do that on all the other serious concerns —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you very much.

### TRENT-SEVERN WATERWAY

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** Last week the federal auditor issued a report that recommended slashing the Trent-Severn waterway's operating season and closing this section of the waterway. This recommendation would be devastating to tourist operators and businesses in the Peterborough area.

The waterway extends 386 kilometres from Trenton to Port Severn on Georgian Bay, and runs directly through my riding. It consists of 44 locks, two hydraulic lifts and 125 dams. The Rideau and Trent-Severn systems generate approximately \$45 million in tourist dollars annually. The auditor's recommendations are shortsighted and would represent a significant economic loss to the community and to the province.

The Honourable Sheila Copps indicated, and I quote, "Reducing service on the waterway would be a mistake," and feels they would not act on the recommendations. I call on the minister and the federal government to live up to that commitment. The waterway is too important to our community.

### OBSTETRICAL CARE

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** As has been the case of late, we've been discussing the issue of



prenatal care and obstetrical care for women in Essex county. Today is no different.

Our minister is on record. He's been talking about opening up a prenatal clinic, something he believed he could do within 30 to 60 days. To date, nothing has been done. He talked about rostering of doctors' service, a rationalization of doctors' service in Essex county. To date, nothing has been done. He spoke of designation of an underserviced area for Essex county. To date, nothing has been done.

Our minister simply talks, and the minister has done nothing. I will tell you that his behaviour is more likened to a juggler in a circus than that he could possibly be a minister of the crown for the Ministry of Health. Which is the answer under? Under which cup do you find the ball? Will we have rostering? Will we have rationalized service? Will we have a prenatal clinic? Will we be designated as an underserviced area?

The latest volley of all that he chooses to throw is that yesterday he said our local clinic is on hold, and why? It's on hold because our local people have put it on hold. Here's the reality. Our local people submitted a proposal; the ministry so far has rejected it. I will remind the Minister of Health that during the committee of estimates on health, the minister specifically said, "There will be new funds." May I remind the Minister of his responsibility to women and children in Essex county.

#### SAULT STE MARIE ECONOMY

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** The picture is slowly coming into focus. The economic plan for this province is congealing and the result is not very pleasant. Small businesses are going bankrupt at a record rate and unemployment is up.

In my own community of Sault Ste Marie we have a perfect example, actually two of them, of the way this government is intending to work and operate. The Ontario Lottery Corp, one of the most important industrial pieces in my city, is now on the selling block. We're looking at the loss of maybe 300 to 350 jobs and all that means to Sault Ste Marie. We are now short in Sault Ste Marie two of our most corporately responsible citizens. Provigo won the battle of the Loeb. Two entrepreneurs in my community who have invested all of their time and energy and the resources they had in a business they thought they would be able to eventually turn over to their kids are now without that business. They are now not able to do that which they do best in my community.

This government talks about free enterprise and the marketplace as being the be-all and end-all of what we need to do to get government out of the face of business, to let business do its thing. Well, the instance of the Loeb franchisee battle with Provigo, that big corporation out of Montreal, and the fact that this province is now short 22 of its most successful entrepreneurs is an example of how this picture is becoming more and more troubling for all of us.

1340

#### MARKET ONTARIO

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I rise today to share a good-news story from my riding. Last week,

the Hobart Food Equipment Group of Canada celebrated a milestone achievement in workplace safety: one million hours in four years without a disabling accident. That in itself is impressive, but that's not all. During the celebration open house I spoke with the plant manager, who shared some encouraging news. Hobart provides a classic example of the recently unveiled Market Ontario initiative, with one small addition. The theme should read, "Grey-Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada: The Future's Right Here."

Hobart is a growing and competitive equipment manufacturer located in Owen Sound. Since the enactment of the North American free trade agreement, the operation has grown by leaps and bounds. Its export mandate has expanded worldwide, with approximately 95% of the production going to the United States and offshore, including Japan, China and Germany. Employment at the plant has grown by 115 jobs — two added just last week — and payroll has doubled in the last two years alone.

As Hobart draws much of its labour locally and purchases many supplies and services in the Grey-Owen Sound area, the spinoffs from its continued growth and expansion are good news for the community, and in turn good news for the province of Ontario.

My congratulations to the staff and management of Hobart Food Equipment Group of Canada, and best wishes for another million hours of accident-free production and continued expansion.

#### TRANSIT SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East):** Members of this House may have been listening in to CITY-TV's on-line news magazine over the noonhour. They happened to be discussing Wheel-Trans cuts. They conducted a poll on whether the public would forgo their tax cut if it meant saving Wheel-Trans for those who need it. It was not surprising that 72% of those answering adamantly replied with an overwhelming yes: 306 citizens clearly feel it's not fair to fund the Tory tax cuts on the backs of seniors and the disabled.

I wish to remind this House that it was just last month that the minister responsible for seniors stood in this House and stated that his central guiding principles are seniors' dignity, independence, participation, fairness and security.

I call upon the government to listen to what their obsession with cutting has accomplished. Cutting Wheel-Trans has taken away seniors' and the disabled's dignity by making them feel insignificant. Cutting Wheel-Trans means their independence is gone. Cutting Wheel-Trans means seniors and the disabled participate only within the confines of their homes. Cutting Wheel-Trans in fact shows what fairness and security for seniors and the disabled means to this government. As one caller to CITY-TV asked today, "How sick do I have to be to get Wheel-Trans service restored?"

#### MIKE PERENACK

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** It's with sadness yet pride that I use this opportunity to pay tribute



to a Crowlander and a Wellander, Mike Perenack, who passed away on November 30, 1996, but a few days ago.

He was certainly one of the key and important people in the development of volunteerism and in service at the municipal and township level. He had been elected as a member of the Crowland township council, had served as its deputy reeve and reeve, and then served as Welland's mayor for four terms beginning in 1961. Although he ran as a Liberal candidate in 1963, he was unsuccessful, but his passion for the community and for politics remained with him throughout his life.

I had the opportunity to speak with Mike Perenack but a couple of months ago in September when he was honoured by the city of Welland as one of the recipients of Welland's 50th anniversary volunteer recognition awards: a firefighter, a worker, a volunteer in recreation and someone who was incredibly committed to his community, to his family, and to all those whose lives he touched.

I've known Mike Perenack since I was a kid, and he had become clearly a fixture in Welland and Crowland politics. We want to express regrets to his wife, to his son, to his daughters-in-law and to his grandchildren. He will be missed but his contribution will be long remembered.

#### INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** December 3 marks the official observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons. The International Day of Disabled Persons was first proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly. Since July 1995 our government has undertaken several initiatives to improve living conditions for disabled people. We have reinvested \$170 million in community-based health services to help people with disabilities and seniors live independently in their own homes.

Incentive funding levels will be maintained for colleges and universities to assist them in meeting their obligations to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities.

The government's workplace disability component includes assistance for employees and employers with respect to barrier removal for persons with disabilities, an access fund to provide access and job accommodation for persons with disabilities, and a shift to consumer-focused job approaches for job accommodation programs.

In housing, we remain committed to an Ontario building code that emphasizes full accessibility for disabled people.

In addition, under social services, people with disabilities and seniors will be moved off welfare on to an Ontario guaranteed support plan that meets their needs, respects their dignity and continues to protect their benefits.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr Speaker, I have questions both for the Minister of Environment and Energy and the Minister of Community and Social Services, and neither is present at this time.

I'm wondering if I should stand them down or whether they'll be making a presence.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We're supposed to have all the ministers — we are given a list of ministers. Here comes the minister now. Thank you.

#### SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Today I want to address the very real danger which countless women and children are forced to face every day as a result of violence in the home.

In response to a question put to you on November 19 about women in abusive situations, you stated: "The biggest threat to the women in this province...is the debt this government inherited from those across. That is the biggest threat."

I want to ask you, Minister, what do you think would be more dangerous to you, the provincial debt or living with a violent abuser?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Thank you very much for the question. Excuse me for being slightly out of breath. I ran in the door to be here for this question.

What I was referring to was the fact that as the interest on that debt has eaten up our ability to pay for social programs they all value, that is why there is a threat to all those people who are on the receiving end of programs. Women are in very difficult circumstances out there. That's why we are trying to protect the 97 shelters, the 100 counselling programs, all those services that are there for women in such circumstances. We want to protect that funding. We want to make sure those services are there for those people, because they do desperately need it.

**Mr McGuinty:** We on this side of the House are sick and tired of all of the ministers there trying to act like the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Environment's job is to advocate on behalf of the environment. This minister's job is to advocate on behalf of the poor and children and downtrodden women. She's not doing that. She's standing up there and making a statement as if she's the Minister of Finance.

I want to raise a specific item with you. The Redwood Shelter in Toronto's west end is one of the most successful and cost-effective shelters in Metro. It provides a safe haven and supports women and children forced to flee abusive situations. The Redwood Shelter is in danger of closing but they have found a way to keep it open. They've been very creative. Metro has agreed to kick in \$40,000. The shelter itself has come up with \$50,000. All they need is \$50,000 from you and the centre is going to be able to stay open and keep women and children from their abusive partners.

Minister, will you now prove that protecting women and children is far more important than fighting the debt? I'm not asking this of you as finance minister. Will you provide this one-time financial assistance to keep the doors of the Redwood Shelter open?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** With all due respect, I don't believe we need lectures about caring for women who are in



these circumstances. We are spending \$11 million extra on capital funding for women's shelters, because we know there is a need. Unfortunately, for reasons I am not aware of, the Redwood Shelter did not request the capital money for that allotment, so we fully spent that money on other shelters.

I appreciate the need that is there for the Redwood Shelter, and that is one reason why we are continuing to pay the hostel per diem rates to support Metro Toronto, which shares this responsibility with us. We're paying something like \$4.5 million for those shelters in Metro because we believe that they are a necessary component and a necessary support for those women.

1350

**Mr McGuinty:** That lends no comfort of any kind whatsoever to the women and children presently residing at the Redwood Shelter. Minister, the difference between you and me is that when I hear that a shelter for women whose lives are at risk is closing, I want to help; you sit on your hands and do nothing.

Just to provide us with an interesting contrast, not so long ago this government spent \$130,000 on newspaper ads to tell us what we already knew. We can come up with \$130,000 for Ontario newspapers, but we can't come up with \$50,000 for 30 women and children living in a centre away from an abusive situation.

Minister, you've cut legal aid, you've cut affordable housing, you've bungled family support and you now are ignoring the grave concerns of women at the Redwood Shelter. When are you and your government going to end this attack on women and children in this province? Will you now agree to come up with \$50,000 for this shelter?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** As I said, we came up with \$11 million for capital spending for shelters because of the need. Unfortunately, this shelter did not get its application in. I do not know why. We had money available for capital funding. We are also continuing \$4.5 million for the services out there. We are continuing to pay for those per diems for those hostels because those women need those shelters. We are well aware of the need and I believe that we are meeting our responsibilities as we try to address that very important need.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Mr Speaker, we were expecting the Minister of Environment to be here this afternoon for a question. Usually they're here at the beginning of question period.

**The Speaker:** Do you want me to stand it down?

**Mr Bradley:** Can you be of any assistance to us at all? How would we deal with this matter?

**The Speaker:** Sure, I can be of a lot of assistance. I can stand the question down. New question, third party.

#### PROTECTION OF JOBS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I wanted to ask this question of the Premier, but I'll be forced to ask it of the Minister of Finance. I'm sure the Minister of Finance is aware of the financial crisis at Canadian Airlines International. Almost 4,000 Ontario residents work for Canadian Airlines and, more than that, thousands of other jobs depend on Canadian Airlines here in Ontario.

The British Columbia government has contributed \$12 million to repositioning the airline, and the Alberta government has now announced that it is prepared to contribute \$8 million annually to help reposition the airline. Ontario has nearly twice as many Canadian Airlines employees as does Alberta. Can the Minister of Finance tell us, will the Ontario government get involved in the effort to reposition Canadian Airlines and to preserve over 4,000 Ontario jobs?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I don't believe the solution to the Canadian Airlines dilemma relies upon further government involvement. I believe that there is a deal there to be had. I understand that the only union that hasn't agreed is undergoing negotiations with Canadian and the other partners.

**Mr Hampton:** What's interesting here is that the federal government is now involved. The six unions and the government of British Columbia and the government of Alberta are talking with the federal government about what kinds of contributions the federal government could make. I want to remind you that Canadian Airlines pumps close to \$1 billion a year into the Ontario economy in terms of wages, salaries, supplier costs, and other spending. If this airline crashes, it will have a real impact on Ontario's economy.

I'm going to ask you again, Minister: Everybody else in Canada, the unions, the employees, the government of British Columbia, the government of Alberta, and now the government of Canada, is involved in preserving these jobs. When are you going to get involved to preserve the over 4,000 jobs that are involved here in Ontario?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I believe that there is a deal there to be had with the facts and the information on the table now. I would point out to the honourable member that in the province of Alberta fuel tax was five cents a litre. As their concession to this particular dilemma or problem, they have reduced their fuel taxes to 2.5 cents a litre, exactly what the tax is in the province of Ontario already.

**Mr Hampton:** Earlier this year the Premier was very happy to show up at de Havilland Aircraft and try to take credit for some of the work that had been done by a government that I was part of to reposition de Havilland so that it would continue to contribute jobs in Ontario and would continue to contribute to a productive Ontario economy.

Minister, Ontario's fuel tax is 2.7 cents. As you noted, even the Conservative government in Alberta has come to the table and has found a way to contribute to protect those jobs. The impact in Ontario, as I said, is over 4,000 jobs; it's over \$1 billion a year contributed to our economy. Why won't you go to the table? Why won't you be part of an overall effort in Canada on the part of unions and governments and employees to help reposition and save these 4,000 jobs in Ontario?

**Hon Mr Eves:** To the honourable member: (a) To the best of my knowledge, they haven't asked for assistance, and (b) when Canadian Airlines did ask your government for assistance in 1993, you declined that assistance. We happen to believe that the facts are on the table now to permit all concerned parties to come to an amicable solution for the benefit of all parties.



**Mr Hampton:** I want to say to the Minister of Finance: Your government received a letter over two weeks ago, and you are misinformed, sir. When we were government, we helped to facilitate restructuring that helped to preserve those jobs, and you should do the same.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My next question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As you know, you have all of your corporate friends deciding the future of municipal government in Toronto. We found out that 75% of the people want a referendum on your proposal for a megacity in Metro Toronto. Will you hold a referendum? Will you involve the people of Toronto in the decision around what kind of government Metro Toronto will have?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** To the leader of the third party, it's pretty difficult to have a referendum when you wouldn't know what the question would be. I could list 15 questions that you could ask on governance in Metropolitan Toronto. Do you want one city? Do you want four cities? Do you want six cities? Do you want a two-tiered level of government? You'd have to have a referendum to try and determine what the question would be.

**Mr Hampton:** It appears that the government's position is that it's okay for corporate hacks who contribute money to the Conservative Party to sit on a committee and decide how four million people are going to be governed. That's okay by you. The people of Toronto, the people of the Metro Toronto area, simply want a role. They want a part in the decision-making about how their services are going to be handled. That's all they're asking for.

There were thousands of people at the meeting last night at Toronto city hall, a thousand people in North York. People are asking you, Minister. They want a part in democracy. They want to have a role in deciding how they are going to be governed. Will you give them the referendum that they're asking for?

1400

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'll be sure to pass on to Hazel McCallion and Bill Bell that the leader of the third party considers them to be corporate hacks. We've got 15 people on that panel, from all walks of life, and it's pretty insulting for the leader of the third party to put them in that category.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Put the question, Minister. Let the people decide.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order, member for Lake Nipigon.

**Hon Mr Leach:** A referendum is good for a yes or no question. This is not a yes or no question. There are numerous questions that could be put on the ballot, even —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister, did you finish your response? Final supplementary.

**Mr Hampton:** Minister, it's your government that has the discussion paper out there now on referenda. It's your

government that's saying referenda would be a good thing in Ontario. This is simply that 75% of the people in the largest city in all of Canada want a referendum on how their city is going to be governed. Yes, you could simply ask them: Do they want a megacity or not? Do they want to be ruled by nameless, faceless bureaucrats or not? I'm asking you, why don't you put the question? Why don't you sit down with the mayors and discuss what that referendum question might be like? Why don't you let 75% of the people in Toronto participate in the question of how they're going to be governed?

**Hon Mr Leach:** An appropriate referendum question might be, "Are you satisfied with the status quo?" I know what the answer to that would be. No one is satisfied, including the mayors who have put their position forward. And by the way, their report built the best case I've ever seen for a single city. A referendum is just not appropriate for questions of this nature.

#### WATER SUPPLY

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy. It seems to me that one of the most fundamental and essential services a government can provide is to ensure that the people of this province are provided with clean and safe drinking water. Minister, can you tell me what makes you want to wash your hands of the responsibility of providing clean and healthy drinking water here in the province? Can you tell me why on earth you're considering selling Ontario's drinking water to the highest bidder?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** Let me say this to the Leader of the Opposition, that 75% of the water plants and sewage plants across this province are presently owned by the municipalities. In effect, the province has the mortgage on the other 25%. It's the intention of this government to turn over that additional 25% of sewage and water plants to the rightful owners: the municipalities.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Downloading.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** No, the owners.

**Mr McGuinty:** If this is a change in the policy, that's coming as news to us, Minister. You've indicated in the past that you intend to proceed with privatization.

Ensuring that clean drinking water is available is one of the fundamental responsibilities of your government. Let's raise another issue: The auditor says you aren't doing your job to inspect the water, and your only answer, unless you've changed your mind here now, is to sell it off to people who are going to care more about — and this is quite natural — making money than providing safe drinking water.

It's clear that you've already made up your mind on this. You don't care that drinking water is an essential service. You don't care that other jurisdictions have shown that privatizing can be a tremendous flop. Will you stop what you're doing with respect to anything for drinking water and allow for full public hearings on the future of Ontario's drinking water supply before you made any decisions?



**Hon Mr Sterling:** Let me say it again: There is no intention by the province of Ontario to do anything other than return or give the ownership of the sewage —

**Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East):** Down-loading.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** It's not downloading. They're the rightful owners. The municipalities want to own these particular plants. We are going to turn those plants over to them and they will be making the decisions as to what they might do with regard to the operation of those plants.

I will, as the Minister of Environment, continue to regulate and continue to assure the people of Ontario that there is a clean drinking water supply for each and every member of the Ontario public. That is the duty of the Ontario provincial government: to set tough regulations and see that those regulations are enforced. In fact, they can concentrate their efforts on making regulations, inspection and enforcement, as they should, not with regard to the operation, which is clearly a municipal responsibility, a responsibility they are much better able to do than the provincial government. It's simple.

**Mr McGuinty:** You'd like us to think it is simple, but it's not. You're cutting hundreds of millions of dollars from your own ministry budget. You're not going to have the people power and you're not going to have the facilities to regulate what you're trying to do.

Minister, I'll give you an opportunity now, because I want to get to the bottom of this. Can you provide us with every assurance here and now that there will be no privatization ventures with respect to Ontario water? Can you provide us with that assurance right now so we can put it out of our minds and stop worrying about it?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I will assure the member that we will turn over the ownership of each and every sewage plant, each and every water plant to their rightful owners: the municipal governments of this province. That, in my view, has nothing to do with privatization. There is no plan to privatize one sewer, one water plant in this province. It is the responsibility of those particular municipalities to deal with providing their individual residents with water, with sewage service, as it has been in the past. It will be my responsibility, this government's responsibility, to ensure that that water is clean for those residents to drink, and we will keep that enforcement. We will ensure that that enforcement is right.

The whole notion of privatizing this came from the opposition. It did not come from the government benches.

#### SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I have a question today for the Attorney General. Yesterday your government released a report that recommends abolishing the special investigations unit, the SIU, a civilian agency that oversees Ontario's police, in favour of a new body that would come under the Solicitor General's ministry instead of your own.

Essentially, this report, which is the culmination of only a six-week study, would put police officers back in charge of investigating other police officers. There are many community concerns about this, as you know, and

this was the original reason for creating the SIU to begin with. Minister, why is your government so committed to destroying the notion of civilian oversight of Ontario policing?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** The report that Mr McLeod prepared does not recommend abolishing the SIU. What that report recommends is that the SIU be a separate and independent police investigative agency, separate from any existing police force. It recommends that the head of the SIU be an investigative person as opposed to a crown attorney, as has been the tradition in the past. Certainly we're reviewing those recommendations. We've made no decisions about that, and we're looking at it.

**Mr Ramsay:** That unit would still come under the jurisdiction of the Solicitor General, who is the top cop of the province. I think, as a lawyer, you would appreciate that for justice to be done it also must be perceived to be done, and that's why we feel very strongly about this. This was a narrow, six-week study, announced with very short notice. Members of affected communities were not on the review panel and were only given six business days' notice to prepare and submit their reports to that review committee. Minister, you can hardly suggest that this was a broad-based, open consultation process.

As you know, the SIU doesn't only deal with matters that require an apology; it is frequently required to investigate beatings, shootings and other allegations of excessive force by police. These are very serious matters, yet on the basis of almost no community consultation you're going to allow police to investigate themselves.

Attorney General, will you give us your guarantee today that you will not transfer responsibility for investigating complaints against the police to the Solicitor General?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Certainly the proposal in Mr McLeod's report did not indicate any fundamental change in the role of the SIU. It recommended that the SIU be within the jurisdiction of the Solicitor General. That recommendation has been made. We're going to consider those recommendations; we've made no decisions yet. I can tell you that the Solicitor General is interested in having people comment on the report. He wants to get people's feedback about what the report says, and that's what's going to happen.

1410

#### WATER SUPPLY

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** This morning I attended a press conference by the Ontario Municipal Water Association, the folks who own the water systems in this province, by and large, as the minister has indicated. I don't think these are the kinds of folks who tend to overreact to Tory pronouncements. They received word, as a matter of fact, from the minister in his public pronouncements that the Ontario Clean Water Agency was on the block and a prime candidate for privatization. They are very worried about the quality of water in Ontario.

I ask the minister: Why are you going along with the government plan to put the squeeze on municipalities to



the extent that in many cases they will have no choice but to sell off their water supply? That's what's got them worried. Why are you doing this?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** With regard to the restructuring of municipalities with regard to resources, that does not come within the mandate of the Ministry of Environment and Energy. The Minister of Environment and Energy is there to try to ensure that there is clean water and adequate sewage for each and every community across the province. That is why we are looking at such tools as OCWA and their competitors, which include municipal employees who operate different municipal and sewage plants across the province and the private sector.

In terms of the operating wing of OCWA, the people who operate the plants, we believe there is no reason why the government should be involved with OCWA as an operating agency. Therefore we believe that in a competitive atmosphere the municipalities, the taxpayers, the residents, will get a better break.

**Mr Laughren:** That sounds a lot like privatization to me. I wonder if the minister could give us assurances that before he makes this kind of move, whether or not he calls it privatization, he will give assurances to the people of this province that there will be — this is what the municipal water association folks are after — public hearings across this province so people can judge for themselves what the minister has in mind, to make sure the same thing doesn't happen to the water supply in this province as happened to the water supply in Great Britain when they privatized it there. Would you give us those assurances for public hearings before you take any such steps?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** First, I've met with the Ontario Municipal Water Association and made it clear to them that the intention of the government was to devolve those assets back to the municipalities. They were satisfied with it and that seemed to be their prime concern.

To be able to do this, because of the nature of those assets, because many of those assets serve not one municipality, not two, but many municipalities, I believe that if we were to go ahead with this particular plan legislation would be required; therefore, this Legislature would have the opportunity to debate this bill and it would be the choice of the Legislature whether there would have been committee hearings and public hearings.

I suspect that would be the case and I would be anxious that would be the case. I can assure the member that through the legislative process there will be some form of public hearing.

#### STUDENT ASSISTANCE

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. In the last budget the finance minister outlined plans for a student opportunity fund where the province would match, dollar for dollar, any donations made to assist Ontario students with the cost of their education at a post-secondary institution. Could you please report to the House the status of this program and the deadline for contributions?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the honourable member for the

question. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to report to the House that the government last May established the Ontario student opportunity trust fund. It's a method of the government in helping to encourage the private sector, individuals and institutions to support the most needy students in our province. In fact, the government will match dollar for dollar contributions made by the private sector and individuals. The trust fund will be used to help students who have the academic criteria to gain entry but who have, for various reasons, severe financial constraints.

We hope to match up to \$100 million in funds, creating \$200 million in trust funds across the province. The reports I've had to date are very encouraging. A number of individuals and corporations across the province are very interested in making this opportunity available to students. In fact, some \$25 million has been raised, and the campaign will be on until March 1997.

**Mrs Ross:** One of the reasons for the question was so that I could highlight something that's happening in my riding of Hamilton West. McMaster University recently announced that it has raised \$1.6 million for its McSOF fund. This will double the amount McMaster has in its current assistance program for needy students. I'd like to read to you a quotation from Dr Peter George of McMaster University. He's the president there. He writes:

"Your government's decision to announce the establishment of the student opportunity fund matching grants program is proving to have signal impacts on the willingness of private sector donors to contribute to McSOF. I want again to thank you for introducing such an innovative and farsighted program."

Minister, could you please tell me and other members how other public institutions are doing with this program?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Of course, McMaster is justifiably proud of its record in fund-raising and the support it's had from its community for this program. York University has raised \$8.5 million; the University of Toronto, \$9.5 million; Queen's University, \$1.2 million; and this program is just beginning. Colleges and universities across this province are beginning their fund-raising campaigns. I would encourage individuals and institutions, those private sector concerns that are interested in supporting the most needy students in the province, to get on the bandwagon to support their local institution and let the province match, dollar for dollar, their contribution in this exciting fund.

#### ROYAL COMMISSION ON LEARNING

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. Parenthetically, you may have seen the TV program on the student who couldn't afford to get a loan and was living in a van. You might want to reflect upon that.

Related to my question, just before the last election the Royal Commission on Learning released its report *For the Love of Learning*. All three parties virtually welcomed overwhelmingly the recommendations that were made. Despite the fact that your party has endorsed the recommendations, you have taken the policy of education in exactly the opposite direction in terms of what the



commission had reported. For instance, the commission recommended more early childhood education; instead, you cut junior kindergarten. One of the authors, a co-chair, has written to you protesting your continued suggestions that your policies reflect the commission's recommendations. Minister, they do not.

You can't implement half a recommendation and have it reflect what the recommendation was in terms of impact. When will you begin to implement the policies that are reflected in that commission, which are represented from the general public, students, parents and teachers?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member opposite for the question. It's a good one. I believe that the royal commission — it cost about \$3 million to produce its report — was not mandated to examine education governance or education spending, so this government has been left to deal with those two critical issues. Of course the recommendations of the royal commission have to be taken in context, looked at in view of funding and governance and the other issues it did not address.

That said, I've been pleased, and I know our government has been pleased, to move forward on some of the recommendations of the royal commission, including the establishment of the College of Teachers, which we're justifiably proud of, the Education Quality and Accountability Office and other measures, including the reduction of our five-year secondary school program to a four-year program as recommended by the past two royal commissions.

1420

We're also justifiably proud of keeping our promise to the people of Ontario and restoring junior kindergarten to a local choice. If the honourable member hasn't heard this from people across the province, there are people who are concerned about putting four-year-olds —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister, thank you.

**Mr Patten:** The minister talks about taking the commission in context. I'd like to read a few passages in the letter from the co-chair of that commission:

"Your activities as education minister so grossly violate the spirit and purpose of our report that even when you formally adopt one of our recommendations, it's done in a way that distorts our intention and undermines the value of the proposal. I call on you to stop misrepresenting the work of our commission."

"Let's set the record straight, Mr Minister. Every part of this is diametrically opposed to what we recommended" — he refers to some of your implemented policies — "and you have no right to associate any of it with our report.... So please stop pretending that your destructive work has any relationship to our report. Stop using us to legitimize your actions. Stop misrepresenting our work."

Minister, will you stop taking the commission's work out of context and accept responsibility for your own draconian measures that are hurting students in the educational system in this province?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** It'll come as no surprise to the member opposite that the co-chair he makes reference to is politically different from me. He's from a different

political party; he has different concerns politically. But I believe the education of our young people in this province is too important for partisan politics. I think improving our school system, having higher standards of student achievement, having a better funding system so there'll be no second-class students and finally moving not only on the recommendations of this royal commission but of the last royal commission to improve our school system so that the achievement of our students will be on a global scale, not where it is currently, is too important for partisan politics. That's the position I've taken from the start of my term in the ministry.

## TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** My question is to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs. Earlier this afternoon I participated in a news conference with tenants from St James Town in your riding. Some of the tenants are here in the gallery to hear your answers to my question. They have two messages for you: (1) Stop threatening our health and safety; and (2) don't give bad landlords rent increases. Those were the messages.

Catherine Howard and Dori Landmark say their buildings have had rent freezes put on recently because of bad maintenance: such things as no hot water, no fire extinguishers and elevators working badly. An order prohibiting rent increases, they say, is an important tool to hold bad landlords accountable. You're taking that away.

Minister, how can you look your constituents, who are going to be looking for you as you go out there today, in the face when you are giving their landlord a rent increase and taking away their most effective tool in ensuring their health and safety?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** The fact is that we're actually giving more powers to the municipality to enforce building orders. The provincial standards officers are going to be given more power. They're going to have the authority to take experts with them into the facilities to make sure the work is done. We're also increasing the fine for somebody who doesn't comply with the work order, up to \$50,000. If we're doing anything, we're improving the situation for tenants.

**Mr Marchese:** That's not what the tenants said. The tenants said that yours is a tenant attack act, that yours is a landlord protection act. Your act means higher rent and less maintenance. You are downloading your responsibility for maintenance to municipalities, and even they have said this won't work. They told us that during the hearings. We hear that throughout Ontario.

Minister, will you show the courage to hold a public meeting in your riding with these people from St James Town this month so you can explain to them why you are threatening their health and safety while at the same time rewarding landlords? Will you have the courage to have that meeting with them?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I meet with tenant groups in my riding almost on a weekly basis. Any tenant who wants to —

**Mr Marchese:** That's not true. You never go down.



**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. The member for Fort York, that was out of order. I ask that you withdraw it, please.

**Mr Marchese:** I withdraw that, Mr Speaker.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Before I was so rudely interrupted, I was telling the member opposite that I meet with tenants on almost a weekly basis. Any tenants' organization or any tenant who wants to meet with me at any time has just to call my constituency office and they can come in and see me at any time.

I should also tell you, though, that this legislation does allow tenants to apply for a rent decrease for poor maintenance. You should try reading it.

### HOME CARE

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** My question is to the minister responsible for seniors. Last week a Canadian Press story ran in a number of newspapers, including the Sudbury Star, about the state of home care across Canada. With our growing number of seniors, many groups which provide health care at home have not been able to keep up with the demand. Caregivers are over-worked, and the article quoted one caregiver who regrets not having more time to spend with each patient.

I would ask the minister responsible for seniors to explain what the government is doing to alleviate this very serious problem.

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** I'd like to thank the member for the question. I too read the article in the Sudbury Star. I am pleased to announce that this government, as part of its reinvestment plan and restructuring health care, has committed \$170 million to expand these home care services for seniors and the disabled, and it will improve access for about 80,000 individuals in this province and create capacity for about 4,400 new front-line jobs in long-term care.

But this is just the beginning of a reinvestment. This government has a challenge, because we need to make sure that seniors are spending less time in hospital, because that's where they can receive many infections, in a hospital environment, when they want to spend more time in their home receiving direct care.

Last week I had an opportunity to meet with Dr Evelyn Shapiro for several hours. She was the woman who started the first home care programs in all of Canada. She was here to talk to us and the Older Women's Network about a growing problem we have in this province, and that is with caregivers. Half of the people with dementia in this province are receiving treatment at home, and 80% of their caregivers are women, and they are —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

**Mr Hardeman:** I'd like to ask the minister, are there any concrete examples of reinvestment of dollars, and if so, could you share them with the House?

**Hon Mr Jackson:** I'd be pleased to respond, because we have already approved \$30 million worth of the \$170 million. I know my colleague opposite, the member for St Catharines, would be pleased that we have put about

\$800,000 into facilitating independent living for people with AIDS, seniors and people with acquired brain injuries. The member for Kingston and The Islands is quite pleased that we responded with about \$200,000 for the Kingston Friendship Homes Community Support Program. The member for Timiskaming will be pleased about some \$24,000 to the Kirkland Lake Consumer-Survivor Family Network.

The list goes on and on. The fact is that we have committed about 44 projects and about another 100 of these projects to expand these services. I want to remind the House of one important point, and that is that our reinvestment in long-term care is essential not only to helping those patients, but also to helping the family caregivers who need relief from the exhaustion they are experiencing in caring for a family member at home.

1430

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Your ministry obviously has been in the process of working out a new definition as it affects disabled Ontarians. There's a great fear within the disabled community that your new definition is going to exclude many, many individuals who currently receive disability benefits, many individuals who have mental illnesses, many individuals who have chronic illnesses, individuals who may have cancer that's in remission and whose condition may change very quickly. There's a real fear that this change, meant only to lower the benefit level of many of these individuals who will have to go from disability benefits to welfare, is going to impact tens of thousands of Ontarians.

Minister, the question is very simple: Can you assure the House today that not one individual who is currently receiving disability benefits in the province of Ontario will be termed ineligible as a result of your definition change of disability?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I'd be very glad to give whatever assurances I could to the honourable member when we get final decisions made on a definition. As he probably knows, one of the reasons we're looking at changing the definition is because it very, very badly serves those in the disabled community right now, the way it is. As he mentioned cyclical illnesses, for example, the program is not very helpful for people who have disabilities that might well be better at some times as opposed to others.

There are many reasons why we are developing a new income support program for those who have disabilities. It's why we listened to the disabled community when we started. We've gone back to them. We are continuing to work on the rules, on the program, on the definition to make sure we can meet their needs.

**Mr Agostino:** You have said absolutely nothing that would reassure an individual today receiving disability benefits that their benefits are not going to be cut off as a result of your changes. I have letters from the Income Maintenance Group representing disabled groups in Ontario; the Canadian Mental Health Association; the Ontario Friends of Schizophrenics; the Access Coalition.



All these groups have expressed the same concern, Minister: that your ministry in its consultation has used the words "severe restrictions and limitations ongoing" as your new definition of disability. It means that if someone who has cancer that may be in remission right now to some degree and who is receiving a disability pension does not fit your new criteria, they would be forced to go back on to welfare and then go through a process of a year or a year and a half, as it's now taking someone, to apply and get on disability benefits.

That clearly is unacceptable. You have not given the assurance that is required and necessary. Again I will ask you. Not later, but today, can you give this House the assurance that every single Ontarian who's receiving disability benefits will be protected once your new definition comes in?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** My ability to give assurances on how we fund and support those who are disabled has been extremely hampered by the inability to get the federal government to make a decision as to how it's funding the vocational rehab program. Perhaps the honourable member, who shares the political philosophy of Mr Chrétien and Mr Pettigrew, can be of assistance in this area, because we would like very much for them to extend the funding so that we can continue to provide the supports.

**Mr Agostino:** You cannot give any assurance, Janet. Cut the crap.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** As I said, we are continuing to consult with the disabled community. It's a very important issue. We want to make sure that the income support program for those individuals will support their needs.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Hamilton East, I ask, now the answer's been put, that you withdraw your comment.

**Mr Agostino:** Which comment?

**The Speaker:** The one where you told the minister to "cut the crap."

**Mr Agostino:** I withdraw it if that's unparliamentary.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is for the Attorney General. Last week you and your colleagues in this House went to great lengths to convince the people of Ontario that there were no more problems with family support and that you had everything under control. But on the weekend, the news was full of a computer problem at family support yet again.

Cathy Dunn, who is a constituent in the riding of Ottawa-Rideau and a client of family support, spoke with Maureen in Gary Guzzo's office on Friday, November 29, concerning her family support. She was told in a message left by Maureen at 9:55 am, Friday, November 29, that nothing could be done because the computers at the family support office had been down on Thursday. They were expected to be up again, but they were down on Thursday.

Later that Friday morning, between 11 and noon, Cathy called the family support office herself and got through. She talked to an employee who said they couldn't check her file because the computer system was

down. She called the family support office again yesterday and was told that the computer system was down last week and that was why they couldn't help her.

Your aide told everyone that there was no computer problem, that the computer had not crashed. Minister, my question to you is, how do you expect people to believe anything you say about the family support plan?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I'm going to refer this to the Chair of Management Board.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** The reason this has been referred to the Chair of Management Board is that a change was made to the computer system by the computer telecommunications systems people.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Members, the question has been referred; the Chair of Management Board does have the floor. I'd ask you to allow him to make his answer.

**Hon David Johnson:** The answer again is that a change was made to the computer system over the weekend by the computer telecommunications systems people. Unfortunately, the change was made to one of the computer systems and it impacted on the family support plan computer service. It's one of those inadvertent routine changes that are made to the system to ensure it's up to date. It had an unfortunate impact on the system and brought the system down. The computer people were working on the problem over the last couple of days. The system is now back up and fully operational.

**Mrs Boyd:** It's good to see that someone has some answers on the family support plan, even if they don't satisfy the clients. The management board chair may want to refer back to the minister for the next question, because we understand today that a constituent in Sudbury East has been calling the automated line for the answers and it either rings busy or she gets a message that it can't process her call. She finally got through to an operator on the 1-800 number, left a fifth message, and a real person called her back and said, "The computers are down." So that means the automated answering machine wasn't.

The same client in Ottawa-Rideau was told by Mr Guzzo's office that she couldn't trust the automated answering machine, she couldn't trust those answers, that she had to keep trying to get through to the plan because the automated answering machine isn't working.

Minister, really, you folks have been trying to tell the world there's no problem with this plan since you closed the regional offices and destroyed it. Would you please tell us what's going on with the automated answering machines?

**Hon David Johnson:** The Attorney General will answer that part of it.

**The Speaker:** Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I can tell you that —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** This is not the Liberal convention, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I assure the members that it is in fact in order. Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I can tell you that the percentage of calls that are being answered in the family support plan today is far in excess of what they ever used to be.

**Mr Pouliot:** Playing ping-pong.

**The Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon, please come to order.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I can tell you that nearly 50% of the calls coming in are being returned, which is far in excess of the 6% of calls that were returned under the old family support plan. I can tell you that the automated phone system has been working. Yesterday calls were being responded to within 20 seconds as a result of the automated system and we're returning a far greater percentage of calls than the family support plan was ever able to do when 6% of calls were returned.

1440

### CRIME PREVENTION

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** My question is for the Solicitor General. When the report by Mr Justice Archie Campbell on police investigations into the crimes committed by Paul Bernardo was released this last July, you said there would be action taken by your ministry. The Campbell report called for better coordination by the police services in combatting serial criminals. This is a matter of great concern and urgency for all Ontarians. What exactly have you done in response to the Campbell report?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I thank the member for Oshawa for the question. As you know, the Ministry of the Solicitor General has already taken steps in response to the Campbell report. This includes the allocation of an additional \$5.2 million to the Centre of Forensic Sciences. This move was praised by Justice Campbell and is an item of which this government is particularly proud.

Yesterday at OPP general headquarters in Orillia, OPP Commissioner O'Grady and I were present at the official opening of the provincial violent crime linkage and analysis system, the ViCLAS centre. We were accompanied at this event by Mrs Donna French. ViCLAS reporting is a powerful tool to aid police in early identification and apprehension of serial predators. Our objective is to save lives through early recognition of serial crimes. As an added benefit, this will save valuable police time and resources which can be directed to other areas of law enforcement and prevention.

**Mr Ouellette:** I understand that ViCLAS has been underutilized in the past and that this was cited by Justice Campbell in his report. Minister, how will you ensure that the ViCLAS system is used to maximum effect, and does this new facility have the support of the Ontario police services?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The honourable member is correct with respect to underutilization of ViCLAS, and making better use of the system was one of the key recommendations of the Campbell report. To spearhead the government's commitment in this area, the ministry

will pass a regulation under the Police Services Act which will make ViCLAS reporting mandatory for all Ontario police services. The member should know that Ontario is the first jurisdiction in Canada to take this important action in the fight against these terrible crimes.

Senior criminal investigation officers from various Ontario police services as well as the OPP will staff the facility, and their commitment, experience and energy will give all police and all Ontarians a fighting chance against these very serious crimes.

I'm pleased with this important initiative by the policing community. This cooperative effort will bring some of the most experienced minds in Ontario policing to bear on this vital area of crime fighting. Through their efforts, the centre will be fully operational by January 1, 1997.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Let me tell the member for Kingston and The Islands, everybody has the same amount of time to put their question and answer their question. If you heckle me, it doesn't do any difference to the time.

### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** My question is to the Attorney General. In my constituency offices in Ridgetown and Belle River, my staff have been deluged by family support calls from desperate single parents. A crisis exists for these parents who are trying to feed and clothe their children and keep a roof over their heads.

We have faxed over 40 cases to family support in the last month and have been unable to get responses because we cannot reach any case workers. Last week, 20 pages of our original inquiries were faxed back with cryptic pencilled-over notes and a legend of abbreviations attached. It was completely chicken scratch.

My question to the Attorney General is, how can an elected representative hope to solve these serious problems if we can't understand the family support plan responses?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Last week we were able to respond to 1,075 MPP inquiries, and if the member has some problems with the answers or understanding what the answers are, I would be more than happy to ensure that he meet with the appropriate person to understand that information.

**Mr Hoy:** Every member has this problem. Everyone is calling our offices on the family support plan. It's not just myself. Attorney General, with Christmas just around the corner, you appear an incompetent Scrooge. My supplementary is simply, when will these people get their money?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** We were able in the month of November to distribute cheques to over 110,000 people; \$34 million in cheques were distributed. There are 200 people who are trained and working in the new Family Responsibility Office. Cheques are being processed within 24 to 36 hours. Under the old plan, this could take up to a week. As I've indicated, we now have a capacity to process 25% more cheques a day than we had before.



## GO TRANSIT

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Do you think it appropriate at a time of constraint, when workers are having to take concessions, that managers should take a pay increase?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I appreciate the question but I am really not in a position of any knowledge as far as managers' pay increases are concerned. I will certainly get back to the member on that.

**Mr Bisson:** I do agree that you don't have a lot of knowledge when it comes to a lot of issues around transportation, but I would bring to your attention the following. You would know that GO Transit, through the negotiations they've had recently, went to the ATU local in order to negotiate concessions under collective agreement so that the GO Transit authority was able to offer services to commuters in the 905 area. The union went to the table; the ATU membership negotiated in good faith with management and in those negotiations basically took concessions around benefits to be able to save money for GO Transit and keep in operation.

We learn now recently that GO Transit managers have given themselves an increase of somewhere in the neighbourhood of 4% to 5% in their wages. I ask you, Minister, is this acceptable in your view? Should the managers of GO Transit be taking a 4% to 5% raise at a time when workers are asked to take pay cuts?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** A question coming from a member who a little while ago wanted to give me lessons on geography. But as far as knowledge of what is going on in the province of Ontario is concerned, I would like to say this: I believe that since this government has taken over in Ontario, I must say that there's a lot more going on in a positive sense, a heck of a lot more than was going on when you were in power.

## DEPUTY CHAIR

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I have a point of order from the member for Essex-Kent.

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** Thank you, Speaker. My point of order actually surrounds your office in some respects. I do have the greatest respect for your office and the role that you play, and your office, in part, is signified by the robes that you wear here in the Legislature. As well, Mr Speaker, all members of this House share the same privileges when they are seated in their place. I want to know, as a relatively new member, whether you believe that it is proper for a Deputy Chair, while seated in his place and wearing the robes of the Deputy Chair, to enter into debate and have exchanges back and forth on issues while dressed as the Deputy Chair of the House.

**The Speaker:** I'm very tempted to say I'll wait for the supplementary, but I will take that into consideration and maybe meet with you and find out exactly where you're going on that one and I'll respond in the House at a later date.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** That's the kind of answer we get from them.

**The Speaker:** But I did it within the time constraints; that's the only difference.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's obvious there was no answer forthcoming from the Minister of Transportation and I'm requesting a late show for Thursday.

**The Speaker:** You've filed the appropriate — *Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I realize that it will be a very late show. I don't think it's in order. No, you're not allowed, actually. It's not in order.

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I did say to the honourable member that I would take the information that he has just offered and I would get back to him. I did say that I would report back to him.

**The Speaker:** Okay, that's true. But there is no late show, regardless.

1450

## MOTIONS

## CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATION

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to discharge the order for committee of the whole House for Bills 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68 and 69 and that the bills be ordered for third reading.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** I move that the order of the House dated Thursday, November 28, 1996, with respect to clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 82 in the standing committee on administration of justice be amended by deleting "5 pm" in the third line and substituting "8 pm" therefor.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## PETITIONS

## RENT REGULATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants and allows for security and stability in their homes and communities; and

"Whereas lifting rent control in Ontario would leave tenants with uncontrollable rent increases and financial instability; and

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favouring easier and faster evictions by landlords;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to save rent control."

Thousands of these petitions are coming in daily, and I attach my signature to this.

### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition from parents of children attending Mountain View school in Goulais River in Algoma district to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. The parents are expressing concern over changes being made to the education system. They wish to be consulted and feel that they haven't been properly consulted.

They are very particularly concerned about the loss of 50% of their special education, loss of libraries, junior kindergarten, music programs and so on. They are appealing for reconsideration of these future changes to education and the budget cuts.

I submit this petition signed by 35 constituents and I attach my name to it.

### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I should be giving this petition to my friend Isabel Bassett, because it is about black bears and she has been very concerned, but it comes from my riding.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Why don't you just read the petition?

**Mr Murdoch:** Peter Shaw sent it to me from my riding. It's a petition to end the spring bear hunt.

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 80% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

There are 128 signatures here.

### ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the rights of Catholic ratepayers to govern Catholic education in Ontario is constitutionally protected in the British North America Act (1867) and the Constitution Act (1982); and

"Whereas the Minister of Education and Training is reviewing and considering a number of reforms to the education system in Ontario; and

"Whereas a number of these proposed reforms would have a serious negative impact on Catholic education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge that the Minister of Education and Training be requested to reaffirm the government's commitment to the maintenance of Roman Catholic denominational rights ensuring that any reforms will not lessen or abrogate any such rights;

And further, that the minister enter into realistic and meaningful consultation with all education stakeholders that will lead to positive change for students."

### ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly which reads as follows:

"Whereas Mike Harris and the Conservative government of Ontario are taking away our voice and democratic rights; and

"Whereas Harris's government intends to cut five northern seats from the Ontario Legislature, thereby reducing the number of seats in the north from 15 to 10; and

"Whereas northerners count on their members of the Ontario Legislature to present their concerns on issues that affect their families and communities, from health care to education; and

"Whereas this will have a direct impact on the people of Markstay, Hagar, Warren, St Charles and Noëlville; and

"Whereas this riding will become part of the riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane, a riding stretching from Noëlville in the south to Cochrane in the north; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and his government have already demonstrated that they are not friends of the north and have introduced a bill that will discriminate against us even further;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to listen to the voice of northerners and abandon Bill 81."

This is signed by 63 residents in the riding of Sudbury East. I have affixed my signature to it and I agree with them entirely.

### SPIRITUALITY IN SCHOOLS

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the 1989 Ontario Court of Appeal decision on religion in public schools never implied that spiritual expression should be suppressed; and

"Whereas spirituality in public schools is currently limited to the reading only of multifaith prayers and texts; and

"Whereas the shared celebration of spirituality is an important part of the overall education of students to the multicultural and multifaith character of Canadian society; and



"Whereas local public boards should have the right to determine for themselves how best to incorporate spiritual expression in the daily life of public schools,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the important role of spirituality and its multi-faith expression for students be recognized and that local public boards across Ontario be allowed the right to determine how such expression can be included in the daily activities of public schools."

I sign it as well.

#### FIRE SAFETY

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is in response to Bill 84. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the firefighters of Sudbury and Ontario are very concerned about Bill 84;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is unfair;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is discriminatory;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 endangers the wellbeing of the people of Ontario;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 requires extensive changes;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 needs broad provincial public hearings before implementation;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand the Solicitor General to rewrite Bill 84 before being enacted into law and after extensive public hearings."

I affix my name to it, as I agree with it.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition which is signed by 25 people who live in the Ottawa area. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and reads as follows:

"Whereas Mike Harris and Charles Harnick promised to improve the family support program; and

"Whereas Mike Harris promised in the Common Sense Revolution that 'government should concentrate its efforts on tracking down deadbeat parents and enforcing payment orders'; and

"Whereas the closure of the family support plan's regional offices have caused a decrease of quality service and lengthened delays; and

"Whereas the cuts to the family support plan have eliminated community-based services, replaced enforcement staff with technology, and limited communication;

"We, the undersigned, demand that Mike Harris reopen the regional offices and guarantee adequate staffing numbers to provide quality services to recipients and children."

I agree with the petitioners and I have signed this petition.

#### SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads:

"Whereas the provincial government is planning to make significant changes to the delivery and governance of education in this province; and

"Whereas we as parents believe that school councils should play an important role in education, with clearly defined responsibilities limited to their particular school communities; and

"Whereas we as ratepayers are extremely disturbed that consideration is being given to abolish school boards and eliminate decision-making by the locally elected representatives;"

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the present structure of school boards within the province of Ontario continue to have a major role in governance of the schools to deal with broad policies as advocates for the students in their community, to provide cost-efficient educational services and to be directly accountable to the parents and local ratepayers."

I respectfully submit this petition on behalf of my constituents who signed it and will affix my name to the corner.

1500

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** They're coming in by the thousands as we sit here today. I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants and allows for security and stability in their homes and communities; and

"Whereas lifting rent control in Ontario would leave tenants with uncontrollable rent increases and financial instability; and

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favouring easier and faster evictions by landlords;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to save rent control."

I affix my signature to these thousands of people who are petitioning the government.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I have a petition signed by several people from the area of Sudbury to Premier Mike Harris, Minister Al Leach and members of the Ontario Legislature.

"Whereas Mike Harris's Conservative government of Ontario is planning to destroy the present system of rent control;

"Whereas Mike Harris and the Conservative Party made no mention of scrapping rent control during the election campaign of 1995 or in the Common Sense Revolution document;

"Whereas a number of Conservative candidates in ridings with high tenant populations campaigned during the 1995 election on a platform of protecting the current rent control system;

"Whereas the government has consulted with special interest groups representing landlords and developers while cutting funding to organizations representing the 3.5-million tenants of Ontario;

"Whereas although all renters will suffer, seniors and others on fixed incomes will suffer particular hardship if rent controls are abolished;

"Whereas eliminating rent control will result in skyrocketing rents in Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the Legislature of Ontario to stop the attack on the 3.5-million tenants in this province."

I've attached my signature to it.

#### SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the present structure of school boards within the province of Ontario continue to have a major role in governance of the schools to deal with broad policies as advocates for the students in their community, to provide cost-efficient educational services and to be directly accountable to the parents and local ratepayers."

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I have another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Rent Control Act protects 3.3-million tenants and allows for security and stability in their homes and communities; and

"Whereas lifting rent control in Ontario would leave tenants with uncontrollable rent increases and financial instability; and

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favouring easier and faster eviction by landlords;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to save rent control."

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Mike Harris and John Snobelen promised no cuts to classroom education, and since their election, the Harris government has cut more than \$430 million from school board budgets, representing a cut of nearly \$1 billion to public education on an annualized basis; and

"Whereas our children have already lost 50% of their special education funding, they've lost their librarians and in some areas their junior kindergartens. Many of them have no music programs left in their schools. Their class sizes have increased enormously. Some are in danger of losing their buses; and

"Whereas parents across Ontario know that most of the changes in education are being made just to cut \$1 billion that the government needs to fund its tax cut; and

"Whereas parents know these cuts are affecting the classrooms and quality of education for their children; and

"Whereas parents know that they have not been consulted;

"We, the undersigned, demand that Mike Harris stop these cuts to our children's education and their future."

This is signed by 39 constituents in the riding of Sudbury East. I agree with the petition and I have signed it as well.

#### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has passed C-68, An Act respecting Firearms and other Weapons; and

"Whereas we welcome real control, and welcome those portions of Bill C-68 which provide tougher penalties for the criminal use of firearms and new offences related to firearms smuggling and trafficking; and

"Whereas existing laws requiring the registration of handguns have done little to reduce the number of crimes committed with handguns or lower the volume of handguns smuggled into Canada; and

"Whereas the national gun registration provisions of Bill C-68 will result in a massive misallocation of the limited resources available to law enforcement agencies, with no practical effect on the traffic of illegal firearms, or the use of guns by violent criminals; and

"Whereas the gun registration provisions of Bill C-68 will take police officers off the streets and involve them in bureaucracy rather than fighting crime, and will make the task of real gun control more difficult and dangerous for police officers;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the province of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to repeal from Bill C-68 those provisions for a compulsory registration of all firearms."

I affix my name as required.

#### SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I have another petition from the community of Barrhaven in my constituency, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the community of Barrhaven lacks any high schools to educate the large number of students living in this area;

"Whereas Barrhaven is the most rapidly growing community in Ottawa-Carleton;

"Whereas the National Capital Commission's greenbelt severs the community of Barrhaven from Nepean, forcing students to be bused from other communities, wasting both time and money;

"Whereas St Pius X and St Paul high schools in Nepean have 36 portables onsite;

"Whereas the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board has undertaken significant cost-saving measures to help reduce the construction costs of its high schools;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge the Minister of Education to recognize the urgent need for a Catholic high school in Barrhaven and provide the funding required to build our school."

Because I'm in agreement, I've affixed my own signature thereto.



## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### FEWER POLITICIANS ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996

#### RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE DÉPUTÉS

Mr David Johnson moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation / *Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.*

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader):** I ask for unanimous consent that the member for Scarborough East be permitted to speak on this bill. It won't be 90 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is there unanimous consent? It is agreed. The Chair recognizes the member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** I appreciate the conundrum, given that the House leader does not have a parliamentary assistant, therefore this is a somewhat unique bill in that regard.

We had the opportunity to travel since the last time we spoke to this bill in the House. The committee held meetings in eastern, western and northern Ontario as well as here in Toronto. I'd like to speak to some of the issues we heard criss-crossing the province, but before I do that, perhaps just a very brief recap of what this bill is all about.

Having proceeded through second reading and committee, we stand poised to enact legislation which fulfils one of the few commitments remaining from the Common Sense Revolution. Our policies have been shaped by commitment, consensus and consultation, not by a knee-jerk reaction to newspaper headlines the night before.

Over and above the philosophical importance of this bill there are a great number of practical benefits that will accrue to taxpayers across this province. I think it's safe to say that in this House, and certainly in committee, there was a broad recognition of at least some of those benefits even from the opposition members.

When our leader first undertook the consultations which ultimately formed the Common Sense Revolution, we had the direct input of thousands of Ontarians in shaping each and every commitment in this document. Over four years in town hall meetings, via questionnaires and at policy conferences, Mike Harris consulted with people across this province, and almost without exception Ontarians voiced concern that government had gotten too big. We were overregulated, we were overtaxed, we were overbureaucratized. Government had become too unwieldy, too self-serving. It had lost touch with its original goals and objectives as it had grown and it had become

inefficient in many ways. It had become increasingly difficult for government policies to be translated into action at the local level.

1510

Despite the fact that over the years there has been a significant increase in the number of MPPs, there is no evidence whatsoever on the issue of accountability or in terms of access for the public or in terms of demonstrable need based on workload that those increases were justified. Back in 1955, there were virtually the same number of MPs as MPPs. There were 85 MPs serving in Ottawa from the province of Ontario, and there were 90 MPPs serving in this chamber. Since then the federal government has seen fit to increase by 14 to this date, with a proposal to add another four for the next election, but here in Ontario we added 40 members. Obviously the population increase impacted exactly the same on the workload of both the MPs and MPPs, and I am at a loss to understand why previous governments were so prone to increase cost to the taxpayers by going along with these outrageous increases in the number of members in this chamber.

In addition, years of neglect, years of inequitable growth rates in different regions of this province, and to some extent an unwillingness to tackle the fundamental democratic principle of representation by population had left Ontario with a patchwork of ridings which saw some members elected by literally six times as many voters as some of the other members in this chamber. I personally believe that every person living in Ontario has the right to have their vote count for the same weight as everyone else in this province.

The leader of the third party represents a riding with only 19,000 voters, and yet Minister Palladini represents a riding with 129,000 voters — six and one quarter times the workload.

In this document we said the belt tightening would start here at Queen's Park. The Common Sense Revolution made it very clear that MPPs were not to be immune from the belt-tightening that had to affect all transfer partners and all the people who were part of the expenses of the provincial government.

I'm very pleased that since our election we've reduced our pay. We've trimmed our budgets as MPPs. All members trimmed their budgets by 27%. We've eliminated the gold-plated pension plan. Now the fourth plank in our platform of personal belt-tightening has reached third reading. This bill will eliminate 27 seats across Ontario, reducing from 130 down to 103.

I, for one, am quite prepared to stand in this House and say that I'm prepared to take on the additional workload, and I believe that the government members share this with me. We're up to the task of handling the responsibilities of representing ridings which will have over 100,000 residents.

We heard during second reading there was even precedent for this move back in 1933, when the government of the day was facing similar extraordinary financial problems. They didn't have a \$100-billion debt, but they had the world's worst recession. They reacted by trimming the same 20% that we're proposing to trim in the number of members today. A coincidence perhaps, but I think an apt one.



This takes us back to some of the practical savings we can expect from the bill. Obviously, 27 members and their staff and their offices and their attendant expenses will work out to a saving of about \$11 million each and every year.

Over and above that, there are the savings that we will accomplish by cooperating with the federal government in the technical aspects of running elections. Clearly, with identical boundaries, we'll be able to have the same voters' list; we'll be able to have the same mapping of the ridings and the same designation of poll locations. All of those things are estimated to save us an additional \$36 million each and every election. Given a four-year average term of office, we're talking about savings of \$80 million to the taxpayers as a result of this bill.

That's \$80 million that can be put into the sorts of programs the members opposite talk to us about every day and suggest this province needs. But of course they had no way to fund them. This is exactly our answer to how you come up with the resources to deal with the important issues. I submit to you that it's far more important that we have funding for health care and education than to make our workload easier here at Queen's Park.

Just again to start with the background on the bill, there's one final point that must be stressed as an inevitable consequence of this bill: It shows that our government is prepared to lead by example, not just within the context of our dealings with the civil servants but also in terms of our relationship with the subsidiary municipal levels of government.

When you recognize that right here in Metro Toronto alone we have 104 school trustees, we have 112 other elected officials — a number greater than the total number of MPs who represent all of Ontario — clearly we have a problem with overgovernment and overrepresentation. It has become abundantly clear to any reasonable taxpayer that the excesses, the unfettered growth in the provincial bureaucracy and governance pale by comparison to what has happened in the municipalities.

It is interesting to note that the support shown to us by all three Toronto newspapers went so far as to suggest that what we are doing demonstrated exactly the sort of leadership that the municipal level of government will have to follow. I am confident in the next few weeks that we'll see the sort of initiatives that will encourage municipal governments to follow our example.

When we were out on the road, we certainly heard a number of differing points of view, and it was indeed a treat to travel to the extremities of the province. It should be noted for the record that this is the first time in 10 years that any committee has travelled during the period that the House is in session. So I want to thank members from all three parties who, over and above their responsibilities in this House from Monday to Thursday, went out Thursday night, Friday and Saturday and travelled the province to listen to the over 100 groups and individuals who made written and oral representations to the committee. I believe their service was above and beyond the call of duty, and I thank all the members, including the opposition members, who travelled with us to the north, to London and to Ottawa.

I guess having had the opportunity now to travel across the province and to listen to those people, as well as to read the newspaper clippings — virtually every newspaper in this province has had at least one article or one editorial on the subject. I note Diane Francis had an article in the *Financial Post* headlined "Ontario Politicians Deserve a Medal for Reducing the Size of Their Government." That's quite typical of the reaction.

As I mentioned a minute ago, all three of the Toronto newspapers came out in support, and it's safe to say that almost 100% of the newspapers in this province expressed a similar reaction to the cost-saving initiatives that this bill suggests.

If I may, I'd like to take a few minutes to reiterate the key concerns that we heard outstanding across the province, in the north in particular. There was certainly an expression of concern for what would happen to the rural northern ridings. I make that distinction because in all three stops in the north, we did not have one single representation from an urban northern riding that expressed concern with any aspect of this bill — not one.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Mayor Poulin, the mayor from Smooth Rock Falls. What a misrepresentation.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Forgive me, Smooth Rock Falls is a fine town, but I would not call it an urban centre. The reality is, in Sault Ste Marie in particular, almost 50% of the people who showed up spoke in favour of the bill, something I suspect the opposition members found somewhat troubling and perhaps a little confusing.

In fact, down here in Toronto we had a submission from Mr John Sewell. That's the same John Sewell, that well-known friend of the members opposite, and certainly anything but a Conservative supporter, and Mr Sewell spoke very eloquently and at great length that there should not be a bias in favour of any region in this province and that we really should, wherever possible, follow the model of representation by population. I think for the first time there is something that Mr Sewell has stated before committee or in public that I agree with. But he hit the nail right on the head with that representation before the committee.

1520

I can go further and say that there was universal acceptance that there was a need for riding redistribution. In fact, in Timmins, the member for Cochrane North, responding to Ms Bonnie Foster's representation before the committee, said, "I have no problem with the reduction of ridings, only with the process." I agree with him. I think the reality is that the process was the thing that we said after the election would be the one issue that we had to address in the course of fulfilling the promise we made during the Common Sense Revolution, because our commitment to the reduction was unwavering but we had to believe that what the federal, non-partisan boundary commission did —

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Appointed by the Liberals.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Appointed by the Liberals — was in fact done in a fair and equitable manner.

Perhaps I can just read very briefly from the report of that committee. "The Commission's Mandate" is the heading.



"In assigning boundaries to electoral districts, the commission must apply the principles established by the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. The act directs the commission to divide Ontario into 103 districts 'on the basis that the population of each electoral district in the province shall as close as reasonably possible correspond to the electoral quota for the province.'

"The commission may depart from the quota where necessary or desirable to:

"(i) respect the community of interest or community of identity in or the historical pattern of an electoral district in the province;

"(ii) maintain a manageable geographic size for districts in sparsely populated, rural or northern regions of the province.

"In departing from the quota to respect community of interest and the other enumerated considerations, the commission must make every effort to ensure that, except in extraordinary circumstances, the population set for each electoral district remains within 25%, more or less, of the electoral quota."

I think this really comes to the hub of why we are as committed as we are to this bill. There is no doubt, and every single presenter, every one to whom the question was put, said that if there were a duplicate provincial boundary commission appointed and asked to travel the province, they would make exactly the same submission to the provincial commission that they made or would have made to the federal commission.

The bottom line is that to suggest that we need to waste more taxpayers' money and waste more time to create a second commission and cross-cross the province at who knows what expense to simply elicit the same responses is clearly something that no reasonable taxpayer would support.

I'll go further. I would encourage all members opposite to read the 1994 Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Ontario, because they detail at great length the submissions that were made to them and how they weighed the various issues — geography, population, natural barriers — and came to the conclusions they reached in this report. There were 185 oral representations and 116 written representations heard by the commission. Again, particularly in the north, they detail at great length why they did what they did.

It has to be pointed out as well that this commission was at arm's length from the Liberal government in Ottawa. This was a neutral, non-partisan commission. There was no bias. I am very pleased that the members opposite did not raise when we were on the road the suggestion of gerrymandering. Some of the presenters who did not know the background and how we had arrived at our conclusions did have some concerns, but I can address them very directly by saying our government had no say in the shaping of those boundaries.

In 1994, long before any maps were drawn, but knowing that the federal government had this commission criss-crossing the province, we made it very clear. The people that voted for us, the 2.5 million households that got a copy of the Common Sense Revolution — and I'd like to believe read that and cast their vote on the basis of the sound judgement that demonstrated by agreeing

with the premises in that book — saw that our commitment, long before there was a map, was to follow the direction of this neutral, non-partisan commission.

The flip side, however, is true for those members sitting in the House today who got elected on June 8, because by that date, 13 months after we made our promise, the shape of the boundaries was clear. It was clear to every member, all three parties, that if the Conservative Party formed the government, we were going to follow through on this commitment and they could expect in the next election, in 1999, to have the boundaries as shown in the federal boundary commission. But they had seven more months, while the commission was at the final review stage, when they could have made representations directly to their MP or to the boundary commission.

We heard in some of the hearings that there were people in this province who did just that. We did not hear from any of the members who are speaking against this bill today, who knew full well — they all had copies of the Common Sense Revolution — 17 months ago that this bill would be coming forward. They did not express any concerns to the federal boundary commission, even though they knew we would follow its final decision.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** We couldn't believe you were serious in abdicating your responsibilities like this.

**Mr Gilchrist:** We're very serious about keeping our promises.

It's also true that almost 50% of the presenters at our stop in London were former NDP members of this House, hardly a representative sample of the community. Quite frankly, if those people were the only persons in south-western Ontario who opposed the bill, I am neither surprised nor concerned, because their policies and their failure to address important issues such as riding redistribution were repudiated by their own constituents during the election last year.

If I can just leave a final couple of points on the record, those groups that came before us certainly all had legitimate concerns. Many of them and others who spoke, groups such as the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and the Taxpayers Coalition of Peel, were all in favour of this bill and its cost savings and its leadership.

Those people who needed some assurance left the committee room having heard from the members on the government side the real story behind this bill. They learned the cost savings. They learned that this was a question of keeping our word, of doing what we said we would do. While I would not go so far as to suggest everyone left satisfied, I think it is clear that the overwhelming majority of people who appeared before us had the majority of their concerns addressed.

Clearly they must have, because our government put this bill through 25 internal reviews, probably the most intensively reviewed and researched bill that's ever been brought forward. Therefore, our government didn't feel inclined to put forward any amendments; neither did the third party, and the Liberal Party had a couple of amendments, which we've dealt with more by motion because their most significant amendment dealt with other issues that will arise after this bill has passed, and we've certainly given our commitment to address all those concerns.



Just to summarize, the key points of this bill are as follows: After years of neglect and the erosion of the principle of representation by population, this government is prepared to make the tough decisions which are needed to right these wrongs. We continue to recognize the unique situation that exists in northern Ontario, and the plan allows two more ridings in the north than would be the case under strict representation by population. That's a 20% differential. The workload for the average rural member in the north is 20% lighter than the average of all the other members in this House. That will address the concerns of geography.

The plan will save money: tens of millions of tax dollars in each term of government after the next election. It shows we're leading by example; it's, "Do as we do." When we talk to municipal governments and school boards, we can show them that we're asking nothing of them we haven't already asked of ourselves.

1530

The final point I'd like to leave for our northern members and something that I think was a useful product of our committee hearings in the north was that we heard at length that over and above the service provided by the MPPs themselves, there are myriad other government resources they can call on. I was most impressed. We were able to visit one of them, the offices of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines in the north. There's one of these in every significant town and city in the north. Everything we heard from the presenters up north was that these offices do a significant portion of the workload that would normally be handled by members here in southern Ontario.

In terms of gathering information and making sure the community is aware of everything from bills to various regulations and being a resource for members to add to their staff, we saw at first hand that the members in the north actually have far greater access to their constituents than would be the case for members such as Mr Hardeman and others representing large rural ridings, certainly Mr Grimmatt in the large rural riding of Muskoka-Georgian Bay.

It's clear to us that those resources, if utilized wisely, if they embrace modern technology, if they use the 1-800 phone service that's offered to them and isn't even part of their operating budget — it's over and above that — if they use this bill as the inspiration to work smarter and to use all the assets at their disposal, to follow the example Mr Micalash has set in the riding of Kenora, where he has volunteers acting as his eyes and ears and his outreach in some of the smaller communities — not using taxpayers' money to set up a third or a fourth riding office. He has done a laudable job. He is to be applauded for showing that sort of initiative in the north. I would encourage all the members of what will be only four ridings, only four rural ridings that we're talking about here, to follow Mr Micalash's example. He's proven it can be done and I'm sure they will find equally eager volunteers throughout the north to help us address the concerns that we must find cost savings that we can rededicate to more important issues.

With that, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to this bill. It's an important initiative. We genuine-

ly appreciate the input we got across this province. It was very illuminating to members of the committee. I should say that when we were in Dryden we even took the opportunity that, rather than have dinner, members from the government went and toured a pulp and paper mill — it was the first time for the Avenor mill in Dryden — just one of the side benefits of being able to travel around the province and see exactly the issues and the concerns of the people in all the ridings.

I encourage all members to support this bill, as it's certainly going to generate a lot of money for the taxpayers and show the kind of leadership that has been long overdue in this House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** That was an interesting speech. It certainly didn't reflect the views that I heard in Dryden or in Sault Ste Marie. The issue that concerns most northerners is the fact that we are losing five seats of our 15. Fully one third of the seats in northern Ontario are to disappear, which means that the percentage here of representation will be severely diminished vis-à-vis the rest of the province.

There will now be, if you can believe this, 10 members across all of northern Ontario: 90% of the land mass of this province will be represented by 10 members. Of those 10 members, only five are rural members, so essentially what you have is five rural members representing 90% of all of Ontario. Given the fact that under the redistribution the federal seats went from 11 to 10, not 15 to 10, I think you can understand why northerners believe this government is intentionally attempting to shut the north out.

During the election, I read the Common Sense Revolution. As a matter of fact, it had television ads that said they're going to reduce your representation in the rural ridings by half. And do you know what? There wasn't a Conservative elected except in North Bay. I think they got the message. I think northerners understood what you were saying; I think northerners still understood what you're saying. And I think the members who were touring pulp and paper mills for the first time, which is commendable, should understand that the people of the north won't stand for this.

**Mr Wildman:** The member for Scarborough East continues to discount geography. While all of us recognize that there must be redistribution to try to mirror population and to have representation by population, he continues to discount geography. He makes the point that the leader of the New Democratic Party represents a very small population and ignores the fact that with this redistribution the new riding will be one third of the whole land mass of Ontario.

The member also says that while he didn't think that everyone left satisfied, he felt that most of their concerns had been addressed at the committee hearings in northern Ontario. I just received today a letter from a constituent of mine from Desbarats, Mr Ed Sadowski, and I'll read a portion of it into the record:

"I also want to formally lodge a complaint with you on the treatment I received from the government committee members. MPPs Gilchrist and Young of the committee failed to understand that my complaint was with the



process; that the government policy of trying to expedite their legislation without regard to citizens' concerns is undemocratic and, in my opinion, unconstitutional...."

Further, he says: "The Premier of this province states that he wants to consult with citizens of this province. Yet when I accept his invitation, my access to important information is restricted. When I point out these problems to committee members, I am verbally chastised for doing so. The government members only offer asinine explanations which are totally unrelated to what is being discussed.... These arrogant and insulting statements coming from the government members clearly show total disrespect by the government to the citizens of this province and it calls into question the Premier's true intentions regarding the process of public consultation with the citizens of this province."

That explains clearly the feelings that northerners had as a result of the government members' attitudes on this committee. They weren't really interested in hearing what the people had to say. They were only forced into public consultation because of the opposition in this House and they didn't intend to respond one way or the other to the representations made by northerners.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** It's a pleasure to respond to the comments made by the member for Scarborough East. I know the extent he's gone to, to do the research and share that with you today. I know he's reported to a number of members of caucus regularly. I've learned from him to appreciate, first of all, the principle of delivering on our promise and our commitment of smaller government, but also doing it in a fair and reasonable way. I like the choice of terms he uses when we look to our federal counterparts, the members we should work with regardless of the party, to service the people in our ridings.

It's very important that we in the rural ridings now I believe are adequately represented. In fact, my riding, Durham East, I would classify as about 60% rural and 40% urban. My riding actually gets a bit smaller, because it's by the representation.

I believe when you look at the total number of members being reduced by that percentage, the benefit is to the people of Ontario as well. The cost here at Queen's Park, maintaining a constituency office, the staff and duplication that's grown over the years — we have to lead by example. That's fundamental. We're asking other municipalities to combine and merge, we're asking hospitals to combine and merge, and I think we have to lead by example.

When a constituent calls my office, frequently they don't know whether the issue they're calling on is municipal, federal or provincial. Each one of us should be there to help them to solve that problem, so we're going to have to work in partnership to eliminate waste and duplication both in the constituency offices and indeed here at Queen's Park.

I want to thank the member for Scarborough East for sharing the insights he's picked up and developed over the last while. He's done a spectacular job, and we all owe it to him.

1540

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I always find it instructive listening to the member for Scarborough

East when I want to know what the Reform Party is thinking or what the notes are from the Premier's office, because I detect that when the member speaks.

I want to say to him, the issue is not redistribution. I think he knows that. Everyone has to accept redistribution. It has to be done, based on the new census each time. That's not the issue.

Your real motive in this is to appeal to that group of people you've convinced that elected representatives are the real problem and not others in government. If only we saw significant reduction in the Premier's complement. I don't just mean the people in the Premier's office but the others they hide in other budgets, because that is what's happening. What is happening now is that you are transferring more and more power to unelected people and you're diminishing the power of individuals who are elected, people the general electorate can get at, can influence.

In the Niagara Peninsula, for instance, we go down to four seats. My friend the member for St Catharines-Brock loses his seat, for instance, and I think he is a person who's working diligently for the people in that constituency and must be very concerned about that.

We have to remember as well that what you are doing is significantly reducing and diminishing government resources. While the member says that there are other agencies of government to serve people other than MPPs, what's happening is that he is significantly reducing it — witness what's happening with the family support plan — so the workload for constituency offices and staff is increasing very significantly. That's one of the problems I have.

I don't think we should increase the number of seats in this Legislature. I think that's out, and everybody would agree with that. My problem is the motivation of this government and what they're not taking into consideration.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Scarborough East has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Thank you for the comments from my colleagues on both sides of the House. I would like to touch very briefly on a couple of the issues they've raised, first off, the issue of who wins and who loses in the north, because that's the way it was phrased. Quite frankly, Metro Toronto is the region that loses the most seats, not the north. Eastern Ontario loses just as many seats as the north and eastern Ontario has a far greater population. Metro Toronto, of course, has twice the population of the whole north, in fact almost three times the population of the north.

The proposal absolutely addresses the concerns for the urban-rural and the rural ridings. Populations vary from the low seventies to over 110,000. That differential is in the bill, it is addressed by the federal boundary commission. The suggestion that we should go beyond 22% below the average to address in four ridings these geographical concerns I don't think is acceptable.

There exists the technology today for the members to be accessible to all their constituents. In what will be the new riding of Kenora-Rainy River, we were told there are 50 first nations communities; 49 of them are hooked up to fax service. There is the technology in the north.



The bottom line is that this is a promotion, if anything. The member for St Catharines suggests that this is somehow meant to disparage the work done by elected officials. It's just the opposite. It is a reflection that we can and we should and we will work harder and smarter and better. We can do better. We're going to restore confidence in this chamber, confidence in our province, and this sort of demonstration of leadership is exactly what's called for after 10 long years of waste and mismanagement.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** Could I ask for unanimous consent to share my 90 minutes with my colleagues Mr Grandmaître and Mr Patten?

**The Acting Speaker:** Agreed? It is agreed.

**Mr Curling:** I have looked forward very much to this day, when I would be addressing the House on this very, very important bill which this government has called the Fewer Politicians Act. They are shameless in their approach to this. They're shameless in their approach, to say that what we're trying to do is to put a demise on democracy, that the politicians here should be less until we reduce them to a point of view where there will be none. As a matter of fact, when they have completed diminishing the representatives of the people through the democratic process, I presume the next step, which they have started already is to privatize everything. As they appointed a minister of privatization, the next step I'm sure is to start privatizing the politicians.

I wanted to speak, before I get into the meat of the bill, a bit about democracy. It's a rather painful situation, when we look at this government today and the way they approach things, the bully tactics with which they bring forward any kind of legislation. First they want no discussion. As a matter of fact, they are worse than that. They will introduce legislation and then tell their whip to tell the members, "Don't bother to read it; just vote for it."

You will recall that when this government introduced Bill 26, the members on the government side, not our side, hadn't even have the opportunity to read it, because they're saying, "Politicians are obsolete." There is a group of individuals in the back room who are spitting out little words, and you can see each day, as they stand in this House, that they are slipped little pieces of paper with what to say. Therefore they have nothing to say, yet the people who have elected them gave them a lot to say, to bring forward to this House their concerns. Then they brought in this omnibus bill, Bill 26, and just rammed it through and said: "Listen, don't even bother to read it. Just vote for it and let's proceed. Let's change the law. Let's take away all the democratic rights that are being exercised in here and let us make sure we amass power on to a few."

We saw when that power was amassed to the few. Let's take one example, the Minister of Health and the way he has bungled up the health act, the way he has appointed himself as Dr Wilson, giving out prescriptions now and saying who should go to the doctor and when they should go. You saw the situation when one of my colleagues here raised a question of not getting any care from a doctor. He immediately stood up, Dr Wilson, and got another doctor to look after that individual.

Now tell me something: Is that the kind of government you want? Of course that's what they want. They want to amass power on to a few sometimes, as we see, rather incompetent individuals, and they've become incompetent because they have taken on this massive role of representing all people and knowing it all, and we saw that in the Minister of Health.

Let me speak about the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing as he stumbles through his portfolio, as he goes about giving away and selling off all non-profit housing, taking away a protection that has been fought for by thousands of people in this province to make sure they have decent, affordable housing. What has he done? He felt he should then sell it off to the private sector. How appalling, but again consistent, and you are right: It is in your Common Sense Revolution.

One of the things we cannot believe is that you have declared war on the poor. You said it: "This is a Common Sense Revolution. I will declare war on the poor. I will first cancel democracy. I will amass power on to a few and we will just have you who were elected clapping when I say to clap and you will speak as I give you the notes to read." Some of the ministers at times miss their lines when they're giving answers — embarrassing to the process where people tell them how they want to be governed. Maybe they have forgotten what democracy is all about. It is by the people for the people, and they have elected these individuals to come here to represent their case.

What has happened? They have appointed themselves and gathered a few to carry on this dictatorial attitude, this bully approach to things.

1550

People have died to have this concept today where we can come inside the House of Parliament, bring the concerns we have from all people in the north, south and in Metro, which differ as we go around, and say, "Here are the concerns." But no, what has been done is that they decided to eliminate as many politicians as they can, take away most of the things we were able to give them and make sure that people have decent and affordable, especially housing, give it to the private sector and tell the private sector: "Now you can redistribute it the way you want. As a matter of fact, I will even give you more power," as one of the pieces of legislation states here. "I will give you more power, and that power is to raise the rent whenever you want it. If those tenants ever dare to move, I will give you the right to raise the rent to whatever you want. But if they are there, of course, we will not raise the rent any further."

Can you imagine? Let me give you an example. Someone is paying \$500 in rent for a one-room accommodation, decent and affordable, but the landlord himself or herself would feel, "You know, I could get \$700 for this unit." So they move. Somehow pressure is placed on those individuals to move, because as soon as they move, landlords have the privilege and the right, given by this government, to raise the rent to whatever price they want, raise it to \$700 a month, regardless of income, raise it. Then what happens? That person's disposable income has been directed in a way that they have to pay more for rent and less for food, so they have to take that option.



This undemocratic bully government, which in its common sense has declared war on the poor, said it's much more convenient if we could have fewer politicians. If you listened carefully you'd understand the consistency and relevance of it all. Furthermore, you have reduced it to a few ministers who, I was telling you, are quite incompetent. You aimed to pass most of the responsibility we have to protect the disabled, the discouraged and all those the government should be protecting to the private sector. Of course, the bottom line is money.

The consistency in this Bill 81, as you can hear the government say, is money, "We must save money" — nothing about representation, not one bit about representation — "We must save money." Let's not forget that the ridings of some members in the north, like Mr Miclash's, will be twice the size — 700 kilometres from one point to the other to see one of his constituents. Can you imagine that someone has to travel 700 kilometres to —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Curling:** They say that's fine, that there's nothing wrong with that. Mike Harris and the Conservatives decide that technology is advanced and that they should put a telephone in place. Let me speak about that kind of connection too, but this 1-800 number gets lost. That's what you're trying to do. If you phone those numbers you don't get through. Each time it is telling you, "The 1-800 got lost; no one is getting through." The situation is that they don't care if those people who have fought for the democratic right to have representation in this House are not in contact with their members of Parliament.

I for one don't believe in reducing the representation of this House to less than what we have. Of course, if we can be more efficient I think we should. Today's society is quite a bit more complex than it was I would say 25 years ago. Issues are more complex. It's hard to get through to the bureaucracy.

Today you can't even get your family benefits payment because one of the ministers, the Attorney General, has decided that technology will take over, and most of those benefits, as we know, are sitting in some private sector place that is supposed to redistribute these cheques and can't get them out.

Then he said, "Why don't we pass the bill so we can be more efficient?" and all this. In the meantime thousands of people are going hungry, thousands of people are losing their homes, thousands of people are not sending their kids to school because the cheques are wrapped up in some boxes. Then he said that passing legislation would solve all these problems. He has no concern for the issue: the immediate concern of those constituents.

No wonder he has no concern. This government has no concern that a member in the north will have to travel 700 kilometres to see that constituent, or worse yet, that constituent, who has gone through Mr Miclash, would have to come 700 kilometres to see that member.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Or Mr Hampton representing that riding.

**Mr Curling:** Of course. In the meantime, as my colleague has reminded me, we don't have a member there. But this government would say: "We could save

money. Just eliminate the democratic rights of that individual, Mr Hampton, who represents that riding." They said: "Oh, no, we just wanted one. It's no concern of this individual. This individual himself can do that."

As you know, Mr Miclash, my colleague, has a pilot's licence, because he already has a very large riding and he has to be flying his plane from one area to the other to serve his constituents.

But democracy is not a part of this government, not one bit at all, because the bottom line is money. If we can save some money on the backs of the poor — it's consistent. This government is extremely consistent. I'm not surprised at all. They have declared war on the poor. It's evident. When they won that election, the first act they produced here was to make sure we reduced the poorest individuals, those who are on benefits. Pull them in, beat them up, take away their money and send them back out.

**Mr Pouliot:** By regulation, before we even convened.

**Mr Curling:** My golly, yes. Is that not a bully tactic? And you agree with me, I know you do, Mr Speaker, and so do many of the members, about what is so appalling in all of this. While I know you'd love to speak out and they haven't given you a voice in that seat there, it's worse yet. Many of those backbenchers there would love to speak out, but the note they got from the cabinet office said: "Here is the spin you must do. Don't speak about that."

He said, "Thousands are coming to my constituency, appealing and screaming at me because they can't pay their rent." What did the minister say? "Go and negotiate with your landlord." "Because they have cut \$200 a month" — they said — "I have no food, I can't pay my rent." The minister said: "Go and negotiate with your landlord. Go and negotiate with the grocers and see what they can do for you." He said, "As a matter of fact, I'll draft up a menu for you, what you should eat."

The audacity of this government, telling people what to eat because it has declared war on the poor. They have declared war on the poor. As a matter of fact, maybe the other grocery distribution place would say, "If you have so little money, what are you going to buy?" They have to buy far less nutritional food or maybe they don't buy any food at all. So the lineups at the food banks are longer, because this government seems to say, "We will declare war not only on the poor, but on democracy, and that is why we appointed a minister of privatization."

I'm going to make a prediction here, Mr Speaker, and you can check with me just after the election: All those members in the front bench who are ministers won't be here and they won't want to be here. By the time they're finished privatizing everything, they'll be working for those corporations, getting bigger money. They don't care. They will sell off what they can sell off here, and then the poor will have to be struggling, coming to the table, hoping that something will fall off those tables when they make the big profit. When they see that the big corporations make money, what will the corporations do? They will pass it right back on to the poor. It doesn't work.

Let us go to the banks. The banks are making tremendous amounts of profit, greater than at any time. I haven't



seen my bill at the bank reduced. Every time I use the bank, they nail me with a fee. If that is the case, if the corporations are making larger profits, we should have benefited from it. They're all out there waiting. You know where they're waiting for some of that profit to be redistributed? At the food banks, because this government has declared war on the poor.

They are a bully government and they will get it. I hope, no matter what they do, they cannot destroy democracy. My father and many other fathers and some of the members here fought in wars for this kind of stuff, to make sure that when you collect our money you redistribute it to the people who need it. But no, they're behaving like the poor have no right to that money, that the people have no right to this money. The fact is that it is their money.

Furthermore, even when they want to make their voice heard now, you've taken away their voice. They have declared war on the poor, because the fact is that access to any justice, access to any representation is gone. It has even become further away from them, because we have less and a longer road to travel.

1600

Let's not talk about money. Let's talk about democracy. Let's talk about representation. Let's talk about people who need their rights to be heard. Let's talk about people who would love to go to school and send their kids to school and want to know how this complex bureaucracy works. They've said, "We have no one." We would not only reduce the representation here, we would also go around and kill off the cities. We're going to call it megacity, reducing representation. Where are the people going to go? To the private sector, which, as I said, will have to be looking at the bottom line?

I asked the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism if he felt the government should be run like a business, and he said yes. I further asked him if business is supposed to be making a profit. He said yes. I further asked him, "Should government be making a profit?" He said yes. I said, "Ha, so in fact on the backs of the poor."

The fact is their whole idea is to privatize the entire government and maybe we'll go away, to disarm all representation here, to disarm the people who have the right to speak on behalf of the people. If I have to go back to the undemocratic way, in the way that this government has behaved — you saw it on Bill 26. When I rise to speak on a bill that I've introduced, they say I cannot speak. People have elected me to come here to bring their concerns, to respond to their draconian way, or sometimes very good legislation that has been produced. They're telling me no, I cannot speak. There goes democracy.

My father went to war, to the First World War, lied about his age at 14, because he was sold the fact of democracy and representation, that all people would share in the great wealth of this world and no one should dictate and bully them because there's representation. My poor father, God bless his soul now — he died — would feel that he had fought in vain. I would tell him today that we have a government here that has decided, "We shall take away those rights and we shall give them to the

private sector as we privatize many of the facilities and the access to it all."

I can see one day transportation will be privatized, but we have no right to fight for that. I was living in the great riding of Scarborough, and along Huntingwood they were going to introduce a bus to drive by. Some of the people rejected it. All those who had access rejected it. They didn't want a bus on their street. When we asked them why, they said, "Most of us have cars, so we don't need a bus to be driving along here."

We represented and fought for it, and the bus came along that street for those who didn't have cars, those who have to get up in the morning at 5 o'clock to get to work at 8 o'clock through the bus system. They have to go to work and their kids have to go to school. They don't have that kind of transportation. But if the government didn't have a hand in it — one of the reasons they wanted to turn it down too was that the TTC said it wasn't cost-effective. But the fact is, can you ask the individual who has to go to work and earn, of course, not as exorbitant an amount of money to buy a car? How are they going to get to work? Again, because we have the democratic process and we feel —

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There should be a quorum in this House, I believe.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Would you please verify if there is a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Scarborough North.

**Mr Curling:** I had hoped that my colleagues would have been here, especially on the government side, because I really believe very strongly that this is extremely important. I passionately believe in what I am saying and I believe in democracy, and I believed that the members here would have been in attendance to hear. But I know that the people in this province, and I hope that as I speak to them — this government is not concerned one bit about the people. As a matter of fact, they wish the people would just go away so they can get a chance to govern. They had hoped that their constituents would not come around and that is why they are putting in a telephone line, in order to call.

One of these days, Mr Speaker, I would ask you to call some of those government areas where they've put phones in. They will tell you, especially those on family benefits, that there are only certain times in which you may call, and those windows of opportunity to call those places are so small that it's always busy. As soon as the time is up, you get a recording telling you that "Our hours are from 9 o'clock to 10:30. You may call back tomorrow." People take days off just to call those offices. Sometimes they can't just get through because this government has downsized its own bureaucracy in such a way that people are not getting any more service. The Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism has said to me that we have to run it like a business, and



of course we must make a profit. Of course, the less we serve people, the more money we make; the more we cut them off, the more money we make.

If we reduce the number of those people on welfare by kicking them off welfare and they want to go somewhere — because they're all a bunch of lazy people who don't want to work. No matter what the statistics and no matter what the survey has shown, that people do not stay on welfare, I have not had one person who has come to me in my office on welfare who was saying, "I'm so happy to be on welfare, I want to stick around on it forever." They all come to me, because many of them are quite highly qualified, unable to get a job.

As the member for Scarborough Centre states, what does this have to do with it? That's the problem. They don't understand the relationship, the fact that representation means accessibility. You must be able to come to your representative, but when they eliminate them, you have nowhere to go.

When this government has appointed itself in a manner that it is not accessible, where are the people to go? I am not too concerned about those who earn a high income and are able to purchase their access or purchase their representation through lawyers and so on. I'm not too concerned about that, because they will get that access. But the people who are poor and the people who are struggling in this terrible economy that we have today can't even reach their representatives.

This government is talking about, "We're going to save money" — save money and destroy lives, save money and destroy the democratic process. As I said, people like my father, and many fathers and mothers, fought in the wars so that we'd have proper representation, because we're a society that looks after each other. That's a civil society. Even animals take care of some of the disabled and those who cannot fend for themselves. But somehow we have lost our sight, we have lost our way. I know I could go on for hours about my feeling towards this approach of this government which has declared war on the poor.

1610

We have a bill they put forward. They have a majority and they will put it forward, and we will vote against it and we shall lose because they have more numbers there and they have been given instructions just to say it one way. As a matter of fact, I give credit to my good friend Mr Murdoch who has come out openly and said that this is a wrong way in which to go, that less representation is not a way to go. I was looking for the quotation that he had stated here, but I applaud him. I applaud him for what he has done and I applaud him for speaking out and not just following the rules and the little briefing notes given to them by the cabinet office or by the minister who is responsible for this legislation.

They had hearings, and I heard the member for Scarborough East say how happy he was to go to the north. He went to dinner and visited an industrial site, and he was happy about that. I'm glad he did, and I hope he continues to go there to understand the north and to understand that people in the north also need representation.

While the committee was up there and the hearing was on, many of the members, especially those of my party,

made amendments to this legislation, to the general government committee. Sandra Pupatello, Mario Sergio, Bernard Grandmaître and Mike Gravelle made amendments to the legislation to say, "Since you insist on having this legislation, maybe there are certain things you should be addressing."

You know, although they get accustomed to looking sympathetic when you speak to them — the Conservative caucus, that is — they defeated every amendment. Not one amendment did they take, and they say they are listening. Not only are they not listening to the people for whom they're reducing access to their representatives by reducing the number of people here, but they are also making sure they're not listening to the opposition who were giving some amendments which could have helped the situation.

We talk about the new election financing limits that should be addressed because some members will take on more, and I want to tell you, I speak from experience in the sense that when I was elected, the population of Scarborough North was then 220,000 people. Yes, it is quite a large population, and I was spending many, many hours listening to my constituents. It has been reduced to a smaller area, but the fact is I know what it is to those constituents there who are concerned that they want access to their members, and today we're going to have fewer members here. I say this is a wrong direction in which the government is going.

My speech will not change them, but I hope my comments to the people in Ontario will say that yes, it is obvious now that this Conservative government, this Mike Harris crew has declared war on those who are unable to fight for their rights, who are dependent on them to redistribute the wealth, who will find out that no, they're going to privatize everything, give it to the private sector. Furthermore, they've reduced the representation, making it much harder. They will say when there's a new election, this democratic process, that they will throw the crew of them out and say, "That's not what we want." But knowing this crew, they will try their best maybe to cancel elections, since you have declared war on the poor —

**Mr Baird:** Oh, come on. Cancel elections?

**Mr Curling:** And they will try it. It sounds farfetched, doesn't it?

I remember going around and debating the discussion paper on housing, and there was a presentation, as a matter of fact, on the discussion paper. Some of the landlords were asking if we could put a law in place to get rid of rent control but make sure that no other government could change it. The audacity of those folks, to think there could be a law that could not be reversed; in other words, what we dictate here will never be changed. The beauty of living in a democratic society is that where there are laws that are not working, we can change them, and they even suggested that.

So that kind of war that you've declared on people — I remember too when certain individuals of the same persuasion, of the Conservative Party, by the name of Brian Mulroney, came in and were pushing people around and tampered with the seniors of this country. A little old lady who made a difference stood up and said:



"We will get you. I'll never forget you." They armed themselves in the best way they can. They armed themselves, these seniors, at the polls and they threw him out, bathwater, baby and the whole shebang of them, threw them all out, because they said they had that power of democracy, of the vote, that X that was not placed against any of the Mulroney crew. As we go for the next election, maybe a long time — and I say to the people, democracy is slow. I must be patient about all this. We must be patient that the people will see the light.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** There should be no debate on the floor. Order, please.

**Mr Curling:** As I speak like this, I should really say this to you too: I'm not talking about every single individual over there. There are some individuals over there, colleagues whom I have spoken to outside of committees, outside of the House, who are compassionate, who have families, who are concerned. I'm going to take this last couple of minutes to appeal to those, to appeal to the heart and the soul of them when they came out here with the intention to be the representatives of the people: Don't take those bully strategies. Be yourself. Consider it and say: "This is a democracy. This is representation. Why are we destroying it?"

Speak up. Throw away those notes that the cabinet office sent to you or the minister sent. Throw them away. Speak with your heart and speak about your concerns. You have life experience about representation. We know, and you also know, that there are others who are less than you who are struggling and they need that representation. Reducing that representation is not an attack on those who can afford fair representation at a higher level, but to reduce the representation at the lower level of individuals who really have no one else sometimes to turn to, because they see this huge bureaucracy.

I think that before 1985 there were very few people who came into this august place, few people who have ever come into this building. They were intimidated by all the individuals here who look so important and they didn't feel that this place belonged to them. They were intimidated because they feel that what happens here, they can't change.

But as you can see, the writing is more on the wall. The writing itself is done by people outside who are demonstrating and saying, "We are watching you and we feel a part of this democracy, which we will change." So change as you can in your legislation, because if the people don't like it, they will do with you just like they did with Brian Mulroney — threw him out. When Mulroney was thrown out — as a matter of fact, he didn't even run in that election. What they did was the next best thing. Whatever was a Tory, whatever was a Conservative — because they did not stand up for their own individual principles; they stood up for what the cabinet office gave them to say — they threw them all out. Not impossible. Only two people got elected over this great massive land and this great country to tell you that the people spoke out and they spoke out very loudly.

I'm not appealing to the government to change their mind, because they won't. I'm going to appeal to the people outside there to go to every one of their members, catch them when you can —

**Mr Pouliot:** If you can.

**Mr Curling:** If you can. But you will at the next election when you turf all of these bullies out.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** No, no. The time was divided equally. Therefore, Monsieur le député d'Ottawa-Est.

**Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East):** I don't know how long I'll be speaking — as long as my voice holds up.

**Mr Wildman:** Take as long as you need.

**Mr Grandmaître:** Good, thank you. I realize, after a long convention, that we are still celebrating on this side the victory of our leader, Mr McGuinty.

But today we don't feel so good about this bill, Bill 81. We realize that redistribution is very important in this province and all of us on this side support redistribution for a number of reasons and, I want to tell you from the start, not for the same reasons as the members of the government.

1620

We listened very carefully to Mr Gilchrist, the member for Scarborough East, who said they were doing this to save money, and money was the object. To reduce the number of politicians at the provincial level and use the same voters' lists, I realize we will be saving dollars.

But there is more to representation than dollars. I received my political baptism at the municipal level —

*Interjection:* In 1901.

**Mr Grandmaître:** Not in 1901, but some years ago, and I want to tell you how important it is to be close to your people. That's why it's called local government, because you live locally and you know what's happening in your riding.

What this legislation will do is divide and conquer by reducing the number of politicians, especially in northern Ontario, when you look at northern Ontario and eastern Ontario. But I want to give you an example of what will be happening in northern Ontario. Northern Ontario will be losing 33⅓% of their seats. At the present time they have 15 seats, and they will lose five. Northern Ontario represents 87% of the total land mass in the province of Ontario. So imagine: The leader of the third party from Rainy River will have a riding the size of PEI. I'm told that the riding of my friend from Lake Nipigon will be larger than Germany. And this government thinks — you know, "Let people come to you." But, better than that, we were told in committee: "No, don't worry. With our technology today, people can use cell phones, people can use voice box." But I think the people of Ontario have a right to speak to a human being, to their representative, not by phone. They should be visited in their constituency office. The fact that we're using the federal electoral map — now the members of the government are saying, "Hey, this is great." This is the first time that I've heard the members of the government saying the federal government has done something right. This is the first time they're approving what the federal government has done.

I say first of all that we needed redistribution in the province of Ontario, but I would have preferred a made-in-Ontario model of redistribution. But no, they're saying



that because we'll be able to use the same voters' list we will save a bundle of money. I realize that we have to change our model of representation. It's unacceptable to have a riding where there are only 19,000 people versus another one, the riding of the Minister of Transportation, where they have 123,000 people. I realize that these discrepancies have to be resolved.

In eastern Ontario we'll be losing 22.7% of our members — from 22 to 17 seats. I can say that in Ottawa-Carleton we're not deeply affected. We're only losing one riding, and that's Ottawa-Rideau. Ottawa-Rideau at the present time is being held by Mr Guzzo, so we won't be losing much in Ottawa-Carleton.

**Mr Pouliot:** Tell us about getting baptised.

**Mr Grandmaître:** That's right.

The government is saying, "Let's get the number of MPPs down and we can save money." Well, maybe we can save money, but no wonder people are cynical about politicians — for the simple reason that we're getting away from them. We're running away from our taxpayers, our constituents. This is totally wrong. To say that northern Ontario doesn't mind — I listened very carefully to the speech by the honourable member for Scarborough East, who said that people in northern Ontario don't mind. I have a copy of the Sudbury Star and the headline is very simple: "Cutting MPPs an Affront to Democracy." That's what it's all about.

This government is planning to reduce, diminish, abolish municipalities. Look at what they're doing in Metro. They're thinking of amalgamating six municipalities into a supercity with less representation. They're doing this to save dollars, because eventually our municipalities in the province of Ontario will not receive conditional or unconditional grants. Our transfer payments are diminishing, our number of hospitals, our number of schools. School boards will be disappearing.

Again, what this government is trying to do is to take control. They want to manage this province. Forget about municipalities, hospitals, schools; they want to manage at the cabinet table everything that moves or makes dust in Ontario. I find this insulting for the simple reason that we're all taxpayers and we all have our duty as elected representatives to represent the thoughts and the ideas of our constituents.

Le projet de loi 81 va démolir le gouvernement, non seulement le gouvernement municipal, mais le gouvernement de l'Ontario, en diminuant le nombre de représentants de 130 à 103 et avec d'autres changements à venir, parce que la loi indique qu'à chaque occasion que le gouvernement fédéral va faire des changements à sa carte électorale, l'Ontario doit, dans les 12 mois qui suivent, faire les mêmes changements.

1630

Je le répète : j'aurais préféré une carte électorale pensée qui aurait représenté les gens de l'Ontario. En fusionnant deux ou trois comtés, je suis sûr qu'en plus de la confusion que nous allons avoir avec le même nombre qu'à le district électoral fédéral, on va en apporter davantage. Les gens sont confus présentement, et je crois que c'est une insulte aux payeurs de taxes de l'Ontario.

Il y a beaucoup plus que faire des épargnes en Ontario, et je crois que les gouvernements, que ce soit un gouver-

nement municipal, provincial ou fédéral, doivent faire des compressions budgétaires. On ne peut pas continuer de dépenser les argents qu'on n'a pas. Par contre, en diminuant la représentation, je le répète, c'est une insulte pour la simple raison que surtout les personnes âgées, qui ne connaissent pas la complexité de nos gouvernements aux trois paliers, vont devenir les grands perdants.

Tantôt, le député de Scarborough-Est disait que le grand Toronto était affecté. Je voudrais simplement lui dire que dans Metro Toronto, la diminution est de 30 à 22 représentants, ce qui représente 26 %. Je crois que le nord et l'est de l'Ontario seront durement affectés. Ils sont les grands perdants de cette législation.

Le public — les électeurs, les payeurs de taxes en Ontario — ont droit à cette représentation-là. On ne peut pas couper les liens de communication, même avec toute la technologie d'aujourd'hui. Je crois que les gens ont de la difficulté à comprendre notre système, et on devrait rendre notre système, dû au fait que c'est eux qui paient pour ce système-là, plus accessible.

Je reviens à la carte électorale fédérale. Je voudrais simplement rappeler à la mémoire du gouvernement que les députés de l'Ontario ne jouiront pas du même budget. Au fédéral, leur budget est plus élevé par député qu'en Ontario. Au fédéral, on a simplement à demander permission d'ouvrir un deuxième ou troisième bureau de circonscription, comme dans Prescott et Russell et autres comtés qui sont immenses. Lorsqu'on parle à ces députés d'Ottawa, on se fait dire : «Oui, c'est vrai ; notre territoire est trop grand. On ne peut pas vraiment desservir notre population.»

This piece of legislation is an insult to the taxpayers of Ontario. Yes, we will save money but, as my colleague the member for Scarborough North indicated, democracy is put aside, because if you cannot communicate easily enough with your government — provincial, municipal or federal — then democracy is being attacked.

We will be voting against this bill for a number of reasons. We think that this government will save dollars in order to pay for a 30% income tax cut is very unfair. It shouldn't be a money matter. It should be a people's matter. It's very important that the government realizes that it's making a serious mistake.

I didn't have the opportunity to follow the committee when it was travelling through northern Ontario, but I can tell you that I've read every deputation, and I was sort of disappointed. When we went through clause-by-clause of this bill I introduced seven amendments and not one word came from the members of the government.

**Mr Wildman:** The member for Scarborough East said there weren't any amendments put forward in committee.

**Mr Grandmaître:** I introduced seven amendments.

**Mr Wildman:** How could he have said that, then?

**Mr Grandmaître:** Maybe the member for Scarborough East said that no amendments were introduced, but I want to remind the members of this House that I introduced seven amendments, the Liberal Party introduced seven amendments, and not one word from the members. Their minds were made up. I know the members of the government will tell me, "Look, it was in the Common Sense Revolution." I realize it was in the Common Sense Revolution but I thought they would use more common



sense and consult the members of this House, consult the people of Ontario and come to a reasonable understanding. I think that reducing or diminishing the number of MPPs is necessary, but we're cutting it too fine. Reducing our numbers by 27 members is not good government. It's simply not good government.

Ayant dit mes pensées, maintenant que ma gorge commence à être un peu sèche, je veux dire que nous n'avons pas l'intention d'appuyer ce projet de loi, parce qu'il ne représente pas vraiment la population. La carte électorale ne donne pas accès du grand public à nos députés.

Je serais prêt à demander au gouvernement de réévaluer sa position et de repenser l'effet, l'impact que cette redistribution va avoir sur les payeurs de taxes de l'Ontario, surtout sur les personnes âgées qui ont de la difficulté à comprendre la complexité du gouvernement.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I am truly pleased to be able to address this bill, Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act. I know the members on the government side continue to say that this is really to save a lot of money. I'd like to address that point a little later on.

It seems to me it really was a package that sold well at campaign time. I applaud the government for its communication strategy during the election. It obviously sold. It hit a certain note with many people that had to do with thinking that governments were spendthrifts, that politicians needed to be reined in and that these were not necessarily honourable people. But I must say that this bill really talks about, and should be named, Less Representation in Ontario Act. That's what the act should be.

The purview, of course, is different when you look at trying to equate provincial ridings with the federal ridings, just necessarily by virtue of the different functions the federal government has versus those of the provincial government. We will end up with fewer elected representatives, who will be representing more people than before, with fewer resources.

1640

If that adds up to having better representation in the province, I will be very surprised. I suspect that three or four years down the track, following the next election if this goes through, and I suspect that it probably will, we will receive numerous complaints from people that they are having difficulty contacting or have lost touch with or are not as connected as they used to be to their provincial politicians.

A number of members have made reference to the situation as it is now, and I think those thousands of people who are listening and watching us at home should know that, at the moment, Ontario representation in terms of its proportion and its ratio to federal members is the lowest in Canada. At the moment it's that. We have 130 members to 99 members.

Given that, throughout the provinces and territories of Canada we also have the highest percentage of representation of numbers in Ontario, and I would like to cite a few examples. We will end up with 103 representatives for the province and 103 representatives for the federal government, and we will be representing more people.

For example, the model for the present government in terms of actions to save money is often referred to Mr

Klein's in Alberta. Let's take a look at the federal ridings in Alberta. There are 26 federal ridings in Alberta, which represent on average 105,000 people. What's the provincial representation? The provincial representation is 83, more than three times the number of federal MPs in that province, and this is a province that's proud to say it's frugal, it is streamlined, it is efficient. These provincial representatives also represent an average of 33,000, versus Ontario at the moment, which represents an average of 85,000.

So if you equate the number in Ontario with the same number of representatives that are represented in Alberta provincially, we would have somewhere around 390 members in Ontario if we adopted the same ratio as they do in Alberta. In BC, 32 federal members, 75 provincial members; in all of Manitoba, 14 MPs, 57 MPPs; in New Brunswick, 10 MPs, 55 provincial representatives; in Newfoundland, seven MPs, 52 MPPs.

I won't go on because the proportions are similar in most of the other provinces, other than Quebec, which has 75 MPs and 125 MPPs, placing Ontario first in its representation in terms of the lowest ratio of MPPs to MPs.

We will have some ridings that will be bigger than most European countries. Will this give us better representation? I suggest not, unless we develop superpeople with superskills, superenergy, supercars, superbudgets and supercommunication devices to be able to listen to what people have to say and the message they would like to carry to the government or to the Legislature here at Queen's Park.

What effect this has of course, and this has been identified by a number of speakers, is that it will mean a centralization of power at Queen's Park. It will mean that the urban ridings and the suburban ridings will carry the day. It will mean that parts of Ontario will lose representation, and those are of course the rural areas. Much of that is in the north, some of it is in eastern Ontario; and some of it is in southwestern Ontario as well.

I know it's a sexy thing at campaign time, and it obviously worked at that time. At first blush it sounded good, but as communities begin to look at this and see what it means, they have second thoughts.

The reductions are supposed to save something in the nature of \$1 million a year. I would be most interested to know how that was calculated. I would like to see the basis of that particular estimate. Let's, for the moment, look at saying that this saving, at first blush, is true. It represents something in the neighbourhood of less than 1% of the budget.

But of course this was a symbolic gesture. This is one of the few professions that denigrates itself, it seems to me, by saying "fewer politicians," appealing to those who have a cynical view of politicians. I don't share that view. I tend to think that members who are elected are honourable. From time to time you wonder how some people got here, but they were elected by their constituents. They have a responsibility and if they don't do a good job, then they tend not to last very long.

But when we look at less money, I wonder if in that estimate they calculated the communications costs that will inevitably be increased; the increase in the necessity



of people to use faxes; the increase in people using long distance; the increase in people travelling; the increase in the members in certain territories having to use their cars to travel greater distances, using up time. What is efficiency? Does it make sense for someone to take an extra two hours more than what it does now to travel to see the same people, and if that happens frequently, has that been costed?

No, I don't think the real reason is to save that much money, because I don't think there really will be that much money saved. I think it was part of a very clever package that preached cutting nasty politicians and welfare abusers and less government. I'm not disagreeing with each item in and of itself, but that package was essentially anti-government, and it worked. Now some people have some second thoughts.

As was pointed out earlier by the member for Scarborough East, there was an informal committee that was formed by the government to address the implementation issues of Ontario's political parties. The committee was formed to implement the 103 members, not to consider whether or not this was a good policy — that was a given; this was in the communication literature of the Progressive Conservative Party — and so Liberals were represented, NDP members were represented.

The member for Halton Centre was represented by Mitch Patten. I want you to know there is no relationship. As far as I know, there is no relationship. There may be somewhere in the genealogy of my past, some connection somewhere. But I want you to know there's no relationship. If there were, I certainly would have spent a lot more time talking to Mitch Patten about what he said and how he participated on that commitment. The NDP was represented by Tony Silipo, but many of the concerns that were raised, as reported back to us, were not addressed by the government in this bill.

1650

When we look at the area of the federal government — and of course the federal government's electoral commission delineated and set the new boundaries — does it mean it's perfect for us at the provincial level? I would like to hear the argument that yes, it's exactly the same, because if it is — anybody in management today or in organizational development will tell you that your form follows function. If that organizational precept is true, would you not agree therefore that the federal government has a certain set of functions and responsibilities? There are some concurrent powers and there's a little bit of overlap from time to time, but by and large, there is a difference in the roles and responsibilities and functions between the federal government and the provincial government, and I say necessarily so.

I'd like to give an example of this. Let's take the city I come from, the city of Ottawa. We have a city council with 16 councillors and a mayor, 17 members. We have four ridings within the city limits of Ottawa. It would be like saying: "Listen, why don't we just have four councillors, one for each of the ridings? We could save a lot of money. Forget about the 17 members. That's wastage."

Well, you can imagine what would happen. The citizens would be screaming, the councillors would be screaming, everyone. Why? Because the detailed concerns

of the councillors at the local municipal level are numerous and they are different from what we have to deal with. It's recognized by everyone. If I were to propose such a scheme, I would imagine that people would think I had flipped my lid. I know some of you think that perhaps may be true, but people would think that if I made such a proposal. They'd think: "That's a crazy idea. How can you be so insensitive to cut back a huge city of this size and have only four councillors to represent all the detailed concerns?" It would be quite obvious.

But of course, as you get into the other two jurisdictions, it's a little bit more fuzzy as to who does what to whom. It's a little difficult, unless you're a student of politics or you have a great interest in politics, to look at the whole variety of different functions and different responsibilities held between the federal and the provincial ridings. The dynamic is truly different between the federal and provincial functions and responsibilities, as it is between the provincial and the municipal level of government.

Many members have talked about this and I look forward to hearing more. I find it interesting that in northern Ontario — this is also true in eastern Ontario where we will lose five ridings, five members. In northern Ontario they will lose five members. In such an enormous land mass it's absolutely incredible that you'll have five members in this Legislature, roughly a little less than 5% of the members, representing 90% of the land mass of this jurisdiction.

When you think of that and what it means, it's not only the distances. It has to be. We know there are differences between communities and among communities. We know there are differences from small towns to larger towns to hamlets and settlements and reserves and different constructs and makeups of our people. I will be very, very interested to hear some of the northern members describe the increase in what they have to do, because I know what they have to do at the moment.

**Mr Wildman:** The member for Scarborough East says you only have to work half as hard as he does.

**Mr Patten:** Yes, a good point. The member for Algoma makes a point. He said one of the members, from Scarborough East, earlier said, "Just because of representation, others will have to work less to do that." That perhaps wasn't said seriously or it was a cynical comment, because in Scarborough East the land mass is probably 5% or a tenth of the size of some of the northern ridings.

It would be an interesting simulation game to have some of the urban members spend a day. We all are obliged to learn about the total jurisdiction, not just our own area. Maybe we should link up some of the government members with some of the members from the north and follow them for a day, as we often do when we're invited to follow students for a day in the educational system. We always learn something; we truly do. I've done that and I know members on all sides of the House have done the same. Perhaps the northern members would come forward with an invite to other members to follow them in their ridings for a day and see what they have to deal with. I believe you would have a much greater appreciation for the elements, for the difficulties, the



obstacles of making contact with the people you are attempting to represent. That's perhaps an idea that may come forward.

I represent the riding of Ottawa Centre. There will be an expansion in my riding from 85,000 to 107,000 people. That's fine; I take on the new challenge. I don't find that that would be unduly impossible. It'll be more difficult. I hope the resources proportionately, though, will be available, as they are at the federal level, especially for communications for us to stay in touch with and communicate with our constituents.

I could walk around my riding probably in about 12 hours, but I suspect that in the riding of Rainy River, going from north to south, it would probably take 12 hours to drive from one end of the riding to another. It boggles my mind that we can have such a differential in the land mass. It's not only just the number of people you represent: Where do they live? How many offices do you need to have? Do you have long distance within your own riding? Imagine that.

We know that Ontario tends to be urban-dominated, but I want to show some sensitivity to my colleagues, and I don't care what party they come from. It will be very, very difficult and more trying for them just to meet and spend some time with the people they are trying to represent.

There's another dimension that is important. I know that in the rhetoric from the government they will say that Elections Canada will have done a good job. Perhaps they have — I won't dispute that — but they've done a good job for federal ridings. But in some cases, let's say they are wrong. Let's say we discover that we don't quite like the constructs. Are there amendments in the bill that will allow the province of Ontario to say: "Generally we like this, but do you know what? We're more knowledgeable about how it works in terms of our jurisdiction, the functions and responsibilities we have." Just as a safety valve, we should put something in that bill that provides us with the opportunity to make some minor adjustments to some of the riding areas because they don't honour geographic, historic or cultural makeups that are important to people, not just people who draw a map, not just people who are thinking about someone else but they haven't been there.

1700

I'd like to refer, to illustrate my point, to the representations that were made by some reeves and councillors in the riding of S-D-G, Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** And East Grenville.

**Mr Patten:** And East Grenville. This was up in Ottawa when the committee was on hearings. I found it very instructive to have representatives. I know some of these members were not there on political lines. I know they weren't there on political lines because they were against the bill and I knew they were Conservative. I know they weren't there on political lines, so let's put that aside, and I'm not making this statement on political lines. I'm attempting to make the case that you need to have in that bill some flexibility. We always must have some flexibility in any bill because we know one size

does not fit all and we know that we try something at first, and the second time we go to do it, we've usually learned a little something from the first experience and we change what we go about doing. Therefore, I would like to cite an example.

This was a presentation that was made by a reeve from that particular riding. They go on to explain it in their brief and I will not read the whole brief, but I would like to refer to a few comments that will give you the flavour of what happens with boundaries. I need not give backdrops on creating boundaries and how they can cause divisions when they're done insensitively. You just have to look at the insensitivity of the Europeans in Africa today and see much of the bloodshed because they divided tribes, they divided clans and they divided peoples up arbitrarily with no sensitivity whatsoever. Now, that's an extreme example. I don't relate it to here, but I say it's important to have a flexible mechanism so that as we learn from our experiences, we're able to say, "Hey, that's not working; we know we can do a better job," and we can make an adjustment to boundary lines because it means something to the people who live in that particular area.

What did these people have to say? They said, "The city of Cornwall and the township of Charlottenburgh, which are part of Glengarry, also represent one seat. All persons would be equally served if Cornwall and Charlottenburgh were to join with S-D-G. Not only would we be joining with an area that has been politically, historically and culturally linked since the first settlers landed on the banks of the St Lawrence River in what came to be Upper Canada in the early 1700s, but this new form of provincial riding would also reduce the number of seats in the Legislature by one.... This would thus provide a more cost-effective government." They're making a very positive suggestion.

"Removing Glengarry from the united counties achieves no profitable goal for the province, the county or the people. The people of Glengarry share many interests with their neighbours in the counties to the west. There's a natural communication" between these peoples.

"Therefore, why should we just adopt a federal boundary that has little relevance to us politically, culturally and historically?..."

"To take Glengarry away from its rightful place in the united counties is irresponsible. The natural flow of life in Glengarry is east and west, not north and south. For over 200 years the development of Glengarry has been tied up with the development of Cornwall, Stormont and Dundas. We have established beneficial working partnerships in education, finance, sports, agriculture, health care with our sister counties that have taken years to become successful. We can't afford to lose them.

"The winter of 1908 marked the defeat of the last Glengarry separation movement." Hear this: The last Glengarry separation movement, 1908. It was defeated. "Ninety years ago Glengarrians fought to prevent its separation from the united counties" — that's how deeply these people feel about this — "and today we are here to ask you to join with Glengarrians to oppose another separation movement."

"Glengarry, as part of the three united counties, has been part of our grandparents' heritage, our parents'



heritage and our heritage. Let it continue to be a part of our children's heritage."

They say "thank you," and they made that representation. A number of the members were there in Ottawa. Frankly I was touched and I think most of the members who were on that committee felt something as well. It pointed out that there was obviously a need to amend the bill, and there were some suggestions along those lines. As a matter of fact, they made a good fiscal argument. They said, "If you do it another way, you can even save money, more money than you think, and still provide for the integrity of our historical communities and our united counties."

Mr Speaker, you will know that these are people from United Loyalist stock. These are not wimpy people. These are very strong individuals who care about their part of eastern Ontario. They are great Ontarians and they are great Canadians, and they believe deeply in what they do and they celebrate what they do. But they care for their geography. All of a sudden someone says, "You're going to be divided up," and they say: "That's going to affect us and how we can relate to our neighbours. We'll have to go to two MPPs rather than one. We're going to be cut off from other areas that may not get a grant for a certain facility, but now we've got one that does and one that doesn't, etc. We'll lose a degree of universality and a degree of being considered as part of a logical, natural community that has gone back a long way." These people fought for it almost 90 years ago, fought against such a boundary change.

In the submission they also propose quite specifically some changes, and I would be happy to share this. As a matter of fact, I believe the committee has this particular presentation. My understanding is it has not considered some of the amendments, but given the possibility and the concern that I know the member from that area has, the agriculture minister, who has concerns about this, maybe there will be some second thought, because these people do care.

What is there to be gained by imposing something, and people are unhappy and distraught, versus allowing ourselves to show a little bit of flexibility, not just accepting something holus-bolus? What does it take on our part? Does it really take very much? Is it not prudent to adopt an amendment that will show that we are big enough, that we are wise enough, to adopt a managerial style that will say: "Let's try it. If it doesn't work, we're prepared to make amendments"? Why? Because we are legislators. We are elected by you. We're there to try and make what makes sense — you use the term "common sense." This seems to me to be good common sense, and I don't say that in any pejorative manner. I say that as it makes good common sense.

Let me read to you the recommendation. These people thought this through. This was not an ill-considered, lightly taken issue, as I think I've perhaps illustrated. I hope you feel the same way. They say: "The title of the act, Bill 81, includes wording that is too wide and too restrictive having regard to the obligation of the province to safeguard the integrity of the provincial jurisdiction. The wording, as presently constituted, involves abdication of the province of Ontario government's right and duty of self-determination."

You see how proud these people are? They know what it means to drive your own truck or to drive your own team or to drive your own community. These are very proud people. So they see through this.

"The effect of the legislation is to submit the province of Ontario to being manipulated and...dictated to by the federal government." We know no one likes that. We hear every province, with great sensitivity, make these comments in relation to the federal government very often, although not so often recently, I will acknowledge that; not so often recently, because I believe there is more sensitivity. But any big government can make mistakes. My case is we should show that we at least have the vehicles and the mechanisms for some flexibility.

1710

The gentleman goes on to say: "There is no mechanism within Bill 81 to protect the province from federal manipulation. There is no consultation process...whereby the province can exercise a right of veto with respect to riding boundaries, and this constitutes a foolhardy abdication of Ontario's right of self-determination."

We're not talking about separatist movements as we may hear about them outside of Ontario. We're not listening to the Bloc québécois or the Parti québécois. What we're talking about here is a very proud people in eastern Ontario who care. I think they have a good point. They suggest the word "identical" in the title should be deleted and replaced by the word "similar" — that's all — "similar to those of their federal counterparts to the extent that it suits the Legislature of the province of Ontario." So the title would now read: An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts similar to those of their federal counterparts to the extent that it suits the Legislature of the province of Ontario and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation.

I think that's brilliant, I really do. It shows that they took the time and they took the care to do this. It makes inimitable sense to me; I think it does to most people. I'm sure it does to the member from the area. What is it asking for? Show some sensitivity, show some flexibility as you go about implementing legislation.

It then goes on to say: "Of course, the specific sections of the act would have to be amended" — that's what we're asking — "to provide for the ability of the province to deviate from strict compliance with proposed federal riding boundaries where it makes sense to do so....The guiding factor would have to be enhancing provincial savings by use of the federal poll enumeration figures and names. The cost of extrapolating the figures and adapting them to those ridings in need of provincial recognition as significantly different from the federal boundaries would be...minimal and certainly...an appropriate...expenditure in safeguarding provincial integrity in matters of self-government and the election of the members of the Ontario Legislature."

My reference was because I was personally very impressed with the group that came before the committee in Ottawa. They had done their homework. They were saying: "Look, we're one small area of this great land mass of Ontario, but we want you to acknowledge us as



having some integrity. Our communities are a part of a living history. We are part of institutions that go east and west, not north and south."

There may be other situations that are similar to Glengarry throughout the province. I know there most likely are. Would it not therefore be prudent for us to implement that one amendment that would provide and assure the integrity of the jurisdiction of Ontario related to electoral boundaries, with the wisdom to implement electoral boundaries on the basis of what we know about the people we are attempting to serve?

With that, I hope I have made a point of showing that we should be more flexible and that perhaps there still is time to see some amendments come forward in the interests of representing the people we serve.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Wildman:** I'd like to congratulate the three MPPs from the Liberal caucus who have made this presentation on this bill. I particularly want to highlight the position that was put forward that the very title of this legislation denigrates the role of MPPs in our democratic system and suggests that the members of this assembly and other people who run for elected office in Ontario, whether they're successful or not, are somehow less than honourable and don't really carry out a worthwhile contribution to our democratic process. I think that's most unfortunate and I do congratulate the Liberal members who have pointed that out.

I also specifically want to respond to the concerns raised by the people from Glengarry. I remember that in 1992 the member for the united counties brought forward a private member's bill in which he argued that rural ridings should be given special preference, that there should be a consideration that ensured that rural ridings were not too large and we made certain that rural residents were represented in this assembly. Frankly, I'm most disappointed that the member who is now responsible for rural Ontario as the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has not participated in this debate and defended the rural ridings in this province. The fact is that of the 27 ridings being eliminated in this bill, the vast majority are rural ridings, and I think that should be pointed out.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** I too want to comment on the remarks of my colleagues from Scarborough North, Ottawa East and Ottawa Centre. I was very well aware of the excellent presentation that was made by the folks from S-D-G & East Grenville. Yes, I was very proud to change the name of the riding from strictly Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry in 1992 to include some 12,000 people who came in from the eastern section of Grenville county. They were very much, and still are, a part of that riding, and will remain until this bill passes and indeed when the next election call comes forth.

To say that we're going to try and make everyone happy in this is impossible. An act to reduce the number of politicians has to be very important and looked at seriously, because there has been tremendous overspending in this province over the past 10 years. The fact that Glengarry county is being broken up is certainly, in my estimation, very unfortunate and indeed a sad situation.

However, the county of Glengarry already is broken up because the township of Charlottenburgh belongs to the riding of Cornwall. It's always been an area, when you're sitting with New York state on one side and the province of Quebec on the other, to try and adjust the numbers, and it's never easy.

Speaker, you will appreciate the fact that in opposition it's pretty easy to come forth with some easy solution. In government, it's never easy to try and keep everyone happy. In opposition —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** The private member's bill that I brought forth and was passed did exactly what it was supposed to: recognize the people who are being represented.

1720

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I'd like to commend my three colleagues from Scarborough North, Ottawa East and Ottawa South for their excellent presentations. I think they've defined and outlined for the assembly what democracy really is, the importance of flexibility, and the importance of having an open mind and being willing to accept amendments to make something better.

What disturbs me most about this legislation is its very premise. It's based on the popular view, I guess, that we have too many politicians, who don't represent us, who only create more problems. I take exception to that, because it's very important for us to understand that representative democracy cannot operate without politicians. We also have to remember, and I wish the government would remember, that politicians come from the people, they are elected by the people, and they are to represent of the views of the people.

When you cut too thinly, you're not getting democracy at its best. We'll still have democracy, there's no question about that, we'll still have representative democracy, there's no question about that, but the level of true representation in a true democratic environment will not be present. If that's the intent of the government, then I feel sorry for the government and I'm sure the people of Ontario will be cheated by the government — maybe inadvertently, but they would be cheated by the government because of the premise they're basing this change on.

I would hope that the government would reconsider its position. I would hope that for the people of Ontario.

**Mr Bisson:** I appreciated the comments of I think the member for Ottawa Centre — it might have been Ottawa East — about the now Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, who had a very different opinion in 1992 when he brought before the Legislature a motion that basically said that when we go out and redistribute ridings in the future — because that's a normal thing we do in this place every 10 years — special consideration be given to rural ridings.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Who said that?

**Mr Bisson:** It was the member for Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry who said that. I want to remind members, because his motion was quite good in 1992 and I'm wondering what's happened between 1992 and 1996. His motion read:



"That, in the opinion of this House, when the next commission for the purpose of redistribution of Ontario electoral districts is established, the commission should be instructed to take into consideration the varying conditions, circumstances and requirements regarding representation as between rural and urban electoral districts."

If you go through this document, which I don't have the time to do in one minute, it puts forward a number of arguments about why the government, as he instructed back then in 1992, should first of all do redistribution through a boundaries commission, something his government is not doing, and second, that the geographic considerations and population base be taken into consideration when doing redistribution so that rural ridings are not put at a disadvantage and rural Ontario is not put at a disadvantage when it comes to the number of members from rural Ontario representing those constituents here at the Legislature.

Maybe one of the members commenting — I think it was the member for Ottawa East — could bring to this House what he thinks might have happened to the member, now Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, between 1992 and 1996, for having flip-flopped in his position from opposition to government.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Ottawa Centre, you can sum up.

**Mr Patten:** I appreciate the comments of the members for S-D-G & East Grenville, Sudbury, Cochrane South and Algoma. They all identified areas of import. I find it fascinating to continue to hear the references that are made to the rich historical past we have in this Legislature and how we can help remind members of what they said, perhaps not two months ago but sometimes three, four, five, six, seven, eight years ago. That's always something to remember, because times change and issues change and roles change, but it seems to me that the principles are important to remember.

The member for S-D-G & East Grenville was promoting the idea that we can't please everybody all the time. That perhaps is true. However, I would suggest that that is our goal, that we do try to please everybody. In an instance like this, when you're talking about a simple amendment, with very tidy wordage to go into the bill, it seems to me it would be wise for the government to take that into consideration.

They will pay the price if they show insensitivity, as any government will. I suspect it's not only in this part of Ontario where this perhaps is occurring. I know the member for Grey-Owen Sound has some reservations about the boundaries that affect his particular riding, and hopefully they will listen to him and others who have similar concerns.

*Report continues in volume B.*

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ron Johnson  
Marion Boyd, Robert Chiarelli, Sean G. Conway,  
Ed Doyle, Garry J. Guzzo, Tim Hudak,  
Ron Johnson, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston,  
Gerry Martiniuk, John L. Parker, David Ramsay,  
David Tilson, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Alvin Curling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Joseph Cordiano  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Jim Brown,  
Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Joseph Cordiano,  
Alvin Curling, Brenda Elliott, Morley Kells,  
Peter Kormos, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Frank Sheehan,  
Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Ted Chudleigh  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tim Hudak  
Ted Arnott, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown,  
Annamarie Castrilli, Ted Chudleigh,  
Douglas B. Ford, Tim Hudak, Monte Kwinter,  
Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips,  
Gilles Pouliot, Joseph Spina, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Jack Carroll  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bart Maves  
Jack Carroll, Harry Danford, Jim Flaherty,  
Bernard Grandmaitre, Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese,  
Bart Maves, Sandra Papatello, Lillian Ross,  
Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona,  
Len Wood, Terence H. Young  
Clerk / Greffière: Lynn Mellor

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo  
Rick Bartolucci, Bruce Crozier, Ed Doyle,  
Douglas B. Ford, Gary Fox, Michael Gravelle,  
Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren,  
Gary L. Leadston, Dan Newman, Peter L. Preston,  
Tony Silipo, Bob Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Ted Arnott  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Hastings  
Ted Arnott, Rick Bartolucci, Dave Boushy, Tony Clement,  
Carl DeFaria, Bill Grimmett, John Hastings, Ron Johnson,  
Frank Michlash, Gilles E. Morin, John R. O'Toole,  
Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John L. Parker  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tom Froese  
Elinor Caplan, Carl DeFaria, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese,  
Doug Galt, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Rosario Marchese, Margaret Marland, John L. Parker,  
R. Gary Stewart, Bill Vankoughnet, Len Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Dalton McGuinty  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mike Colle  
Marcel Beaubien, Dave Boushy, Gary Carr,  
Mike Colle, Bruce Crozier, Brenda Elliott,  
Gary Fox, Steve Gilchrist, John Hastings,  
Gerard Kennedy, Shelley Martel, Dalton McGuinty,  
Gilles Pouliot, Toni Skarica  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Smith  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Dave Boushy, John Hastings,  
Tony Martin, John R. O'Toole, Trevor Pettit,  
Sandra Papatello, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Tony Ruprecht,  
Mario Sergio, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Resources development /  
Développement des ressources**

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Barbara Fisher  
John R. Baird, Jack Carroll, David Christopherson,  
Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Dwight Duncan,  
Barbara Fisher, Steve Gilchrist, Pat Hoy,  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Bart Maves, Bill Murdoch,  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Président: Richard Patten  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Gerretsen  
David S. Cooke, Tom Froese, John Gerretsen,  
Michael Gravelle, Helen Johns, W. Leo Jordan,  
Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Julia Munro,  
Richard Patten, Trevor Pettit, Peter L. Preston,  
Lillian Ross, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum



# CONTENTS

Tuesday 3 December 1996

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Forest firefighting</b>	
Mr Gravelle	5549
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Ms Martel	5549
<b>Trent-Severn Waterway</b>	
Mr Stewart	5549
<b>Obstetrical care</b>	
Mrs Pupatello	5550
<b>Sault Ste Marie economy</b>	
Mr Martin	5550
<b>Market Ontario</b>	
Mr Murdoch	5550
<b>Transit services for the disabled</b>	
Mr Morin	5550
<b>Mike Perenack</b>	
Mr Kormos	5551
<b>International Day of Disabled Persons</b>	
Mr Hastings	5551

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Services for abused women</b>	
Mr McGuinty	5551
Mrs Ecker	5551
<b>Protection of jobs</b>	
Mr Hampton	5552
Mr Eves	5553
<b>Municipal restructuring</b>	
Mr Hampton	5553
Mr Leach	5553
<b>Water supply</b>	
Mr McGuinty	5553
Mr Sterling	5553, 5555
Mr Laughren	5555
<b>Special investigations unit</b>	
Mr Ramsay	5554
Mr Harnick	5554
<b>Student assistance</b>	
Mrs Ross	5555
Mr Snobelen	5555
<b>Royal Commission on Learning</b>	
Mr Patten	5556
Mr Snobelen	5556
<b>Tenant protection</b>	
Mr Marchese	5556
Mr Leach	5556
<b>Home care</b>	
Mr Hardeman	5557
Mr Jackson	5557

## Social assistance for the disabled

Mr Agostino	5557
Mrs Ecker	5557
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Mrs Boyd	5558
Mr David Johnson	5558
Mr Harnick	5559
Mr Hoy	5559
<b>Crime prevention</b>	
Mr Ouellette	5559
Mr Runciman	5559
<b>GO Transit</b>	
Mr Bisson	5560
Mr Palladini	5560

## MOTIONS

<b>Consideration of legislation</b>	
Mr David Johnson	5560
Agreed to	5560
<b>Standing committee on administration of justice</b>	
Mr David Johnson	5560
Agreed to	5560

## PETITIONS

<b>Rent regulation</b>	
Mr Curling	5561, 5562, 5563
Mr Silipo	5562
<b>Education reform</b>	
Mr Wildman	5561
<b>Bear hunting</b>	
Mr Murdoch	5561
<b>Roman Catholic schools</b>	
Mr Patten	5561
<b>Electoral representation</b>	
Ms Martel	5561
<b>Spirituality in schools</b>	
Mr Stewart	5562
<b>Fire safety</b>	
Mr Bartolucci	5562
<b>Family support plan</b>	
Ms Martel	5562
<b>School boards</b>	
Mrs Fisher	5562
Mr Hardeman	5563
<b>Education financing</b>	
Ms Martel	5563
<b>Firearms control</b>	
Mr Ouellette	5563
<b>School accommodation</b>	
Mr Baird	5563

## THIRD READINGS

<b>Fewer Politicians Act, 1996,</b>	
Bill 81, <i>Mr David Johnson</i>	
Mr Gilchrist	5564, 5568
Mr Michael Brown	5567
Mr Wildman	5567, 5579
Mr O'Toole	5568
Mr Bradley	5568
Mr Curling	5569
Mr Grandmaître	5573
Mr Patten	5575, 5580
Mr Villeneuve	5579
Mr Bartolucci	5579
Mr Bisson	5579

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Deputy Chair</b>	
Mr Hoy	5560
The Speaker	5560

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 3 décembre 1996

## TROISIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 1996 réduisant le nombre de députés, projet de loi 81,</b>	
<i>M. David Johnson</i>	
M. Grandmaître	5574, 5575

CARON  
XI  
-023

Government  
Publications



No. 132B

N° 132B

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 3 December 1996

Mardi 3 décembre 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Subscriptions**

Subscription information may be obtained from: Sessional Subscription Service, Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

### **Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### **Abonnements**

Pour les abonnements, veuillez prendre contact avec le Service d'abonnement parlementaire, Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311 ou, sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 December 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 décembre 1996

*Report continued from volume A.*

1725

## FEWER POLITICIANS ACT, 1996

### LOI DE 1996

### RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE DÉPUTÉS

Continuation of debate on the motion for third reading of Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation / *Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Further debate?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Thank you for this opportunity to finally get in on the debate of this particular bill. People here in the Legislature would know, but maybe people watching at home do not know that we are now in the final days of third reading of this bill. In two legislative debate days' time the government will have the mandate, by sheer majority of that side of the House, to redistribute all the ridings in Ontario to be coterminous with the federal boundaries, and the government is having us believe that this is a good thing.

The government has decided through its manifesto, the Common Sense Revolution, dreamed up over a couple of nights over beers at the Bradgate Arms when they ran in the last election, that it would be a good thing to make some promises that went to the notion of being opposed to the idea of government and to the idea of what governments are all about. So they put in the Common Sense Revolution this particular promise, as they call it, to make the ridings coterminous so that when this is done the federal and provincial ridings will look the same.

I would like, first of all, to set out that I am opposed to this legislation and I will set out through this debate why I'm opposed to it. The other caveat I would like to say up front: Should there be redistribution? Of course there should be redistribution. Redistribution happens every 10 years. It is a natural evolution, and ridings get changed according to the demographics of ridings in Ontario. What is this government doing? It is doing nothing of the sort. It is trying to play to a notion that governments are bad, politicians are evil and that if we get rid of government and politicians our lives will be

better. This legislation is all about playing into the theme the Tory government is trying to play on.

Before I wade into that I have to go back to this. I remember that back in 1992 the member for Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry at the time, now the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, coming to this Legislature and presenting us with a private bill that said to the then NDP government of Bob Rae that we needed to protect rural Ontario from losing representation at Queen's Park. I will read what the motion said:

"That, in the opinion of this House, when the next commission for the purpose of redistribution of Ontario electoral districts is established, the commission should be instructed to take into consideration the varying conditions, circumstances and requirements regarding representation as between rural and urban electoral districts, and the increase in geographic area of rural ridings after the redistribution of the 1970s and the 1980s, with the intention of creating three classifications of constituencies" — this really, I think, encapsulated what we should be doing, what those classifications be — "urban, urban-rural, and rural, so as to limit the geographic area of rural ridings, and to a lesser degree that of urban-rural ridings, as well as the number of organized municipalities which members must represent."

What the then member, now Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, was alluding to was that if you allow ridings in rural Ontario and northern Ontario to become so vast, a member will not be able to represent those constituents in the manner he or she would like to, as is afforded members living in urban areas. The member then recognized that there was a difference between a rural riding and an urban riding.

I come from a mixed rural-urban riding in northern Ontario. I can tell you from personal experiences, as can other members on all sides of the House who represent similar ridings, that life in those ridings and the work we do as MPPs are very different from what a member will do in an urban setting such as Toronto, Hamilton or Windsor. We often, for example, are the only office that people can come to when they have a problem with government, whatever the government might be.

If you live in the city of Toronto and you have a problem with your government, there is a multitude of offices that members of the public can go to to try to get their concerns addressed. There are government offices of various ministries, there are government agency offices, plus there are multitudes of MPPs' offices within that particular community. But if you're living in Chapleau or Timmins or Hearst or wherever it might be in a smaller community, there are not a lot of places you can go when you have a problem.



One of the things we do as members is that we service our constituents in a very different way from urban ridings. We deal a lot with the everyday problems constituents have. People come to our offices for everything, from help with economic development — I can tell you, as a member of a government that was active in economic development, under the Bob Rae NDP government, my office over that five-year period on an almost daily basis was dealing with proponents of projects in the industrial sector, in the resource sector and within the commercial sector as well.

We often were the only avenue people had when trying to get projects off the ground and trying to get the issues explained to bureaucrats or trying to get issues before the government. We were sometimes the only way they were able to do that.

I can tell you personal examples. For example, in the town of Iroquois Falls, Abitibi wanted to invest some \$150 million in a TMP plant. We played, in my office, a very large role. We weren't the ones who made the investment happen by its own; of course Abitibi wanted to do this as well. But we played a very large role in making the connection between the players at Abitibi and the government of Ontario and the various ministries that were affected, like MNR.

When Mallette granite, as an example, wanted to build a brand-new granite plant in a community just outside Iroquois Falls, by Porquis Junction, they came to my office. That's basically the work we did. Working with the then local mayor in the town of Iroquois Falls, we connected them to all the various funding mechanisms that were available through the provincial government back then. But also we played a very important role in them being able to deal with a sort of a one-window approach in the permitting process and application process they had to do for various items.

We also dealt with private sector issues with that particular project. We also, as members in local constituencies such as that, deal with day-to-day problems, probably in a very different way than you would, let's say, in Toronto. I don't mean this as a rant against members who represent constituents in Toronto, because Toronto is Toronto and Timmins is Timmins. But I'll give you an example of what you get on a Friday morning and a Saturday morning when you do constituency appointments. You get people who are coming in with all kinds of different problems, and sometimes those problems are pretty severe.

I had one gentleman in my office, I believe about two weeks ago, on a Friday or a Thursday. I think it was constituency week in fact. He's unfortunately becoming much more typical of people coming into my constituency office. The constituent walked into the office, wanted to meet with his MPP, would not deal with anybody else, didn't want to deal with the bureaucrats at the Ministry of Community and Social Services, didn't want to deal with the people working at the city of Timmins, didn't even want to deal with my staff; he wanted to deal with me personally, for whatever reason, right or wrong.

When I finally got an opportunity to meet him, about 10 or 15 minutes after he got into my office, he started

to tell me the story he was going through. Because of circumstance, the individual lost his job working in a particular company in the city of Timmins, and because of the changes of criteria to the GWA and FBA — in other words, the welfare and family benefits — made by this government, he was not able to qualify for welfare benefits.

This guy couldn't get unemployment insurance. The federal Liberals had cut off his ability to get unemployment insurance because they will not, under certain circumstances, pay UI, and your government followed suit and did the same thing as the federal Liberals. So this man was in a situation where he was out of his home, had been out of his home since the month of August, was basically without any source of income. Where he was living, and this is a pretty scary thought in a place like Timmins, was literally in a tent in the bush in the month of November.

#### *Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** The member opposite says, "What's the point?" The point I'm making is that this particular individual had nowhere to go. He didn't know where to go to get assistance. It's a fairly tragic story.

Basically, I had to do a lot of work getting on the phone trying to deal with the city of Timmins people and with other people to get this guy emergency assistance. If that individual hadn't got to me, it is quite likely that person would not be alive today, because he was suicidal.

The point I'm getting at is that we in the north and we in other communities across northern and rural Ontario play a very direct role within our communities. When you come with your parliamentary committee to places like Timmins, and your members, like the member for Scarborough East, make comments about whether you can somehow run MPPs' offices more efficiently by making the ridings five times the size they are now, making them difficult to service in regard to what they are now by taking advantage of telecommunications, fax machines, modems and the rest — they don't realize that we do a lot of work directly with constituents who would not get to us by way of a fax, modem or any other electronic means.

I say to the government members that I understand your zeal to fulfil what is an ideological principle, that you don't believe there should be government to the extent there is now and that there should be fewer politicians, but there's a cost to doing that. The cost is that the average person on the street, and people out there who need to get access to their elected representatives, will have less of an ability to do so once this legislation is passed. I say to the members opposite that it is definitely a problem you need to address.

I want to turn to a comment that was made before the standing committee in London by Mr Kimble Sutherland, a former member of this Legislature, when he presented and made a couple of points that I think are important to this debate. He talks about, and I quote:

"Representative democracy cannot operate without politicians. Politicians come from the people to represent the people and make decisions on their behalf. The ongoing denigration of politicians in a representative democracy is a denigration of democracy itself."



What he's getting at here, and what I was trying to say at the beginning, is that there's a notion on the part of the government that if you get rid of politicians, you're somehow going to cure the problem. Let me tell you that is not going to happen.

You will be moving the power from the hands of elected representatives in Ontario to the hands of a very few within the Premier's office and nameless, faceless bureaucrats in the city of Toronto who will end up making decisions that should be made by the elected representatives of this province.

I don't know see how you're giving a great service to the people of this province in moving away from a system, where we have decided over a period of time that we should have elected representatives, to represent us within the goings-on of government and moving to the system you're proposing. I think it is dangerous and that in the end you're undermining the very values of what democracy is all about. That is not going to serve us well in the long run.

We have developed, over the years, a system of democracy that we are all proud of. The very tenet of democracy is to make sure we have elected representatives, who come for their own reasons, based on ideological beliefs and wanting to serve their community, to go to an elected body such as the Legislature of Ontario and represent the people of their constituency. The moment you move away from that and say, "Well, somehow we're going to get better government by having fewer MPPs and less government," you're moving to a system that I think we fought hard not to get into, a system of dictatorship. To make our democracy work, you have to have elected representatives there as watchdogs, people who are not worried about looking over their shoulder to see if their supervisor is going to be making bad comments or having repercussions in the event that the system itself breaks down and doesn't serve the constituent.

One thing we can do as elected representatives, because we have only one boss, the people at the electoral polls every five years, to get re-elected is to speak out on behalf of those individuals. Having fewer of us is going to mean that's a problem.

Un point de cette législation que le gouvernement a fallu déclarer comme problème, c'est la question de ce que ça veut dire pour la communauté francophone de l'Ontario. On sait en Ontario qu'il était toujours très difficile, en tant que francophones, d'être élus en nombre ici à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario. On est chanceux dans un Parlement si on a une dizaine de membres de la communauté francophone qui peuvent venir ici à la Législature pour parler pour leur communauté et qui sont capables d'oeuvrer pour avancer les questions qui sont importantes à la communauté francophone de l'Ontario.

Mais étant donné la manière dont le gouvernement fait le changement faisant affaire avec ce projet de loi, il va devenir plus difficile pour les francophones d'être élus, parce que les comtés qui sont les plus affectés par les changements que le gouvernement propose dans cette législation sont justement les comtés dans le nord-est de l'Ontario où la population francophone est très grande, et aussi dans les comtés de l'est de l'Ontario où les franco-

phones se trouvent en majorité dans beaucoup de circonscriptions.

Par exemple, dans les circonscriptions de Cochrane-Sud et Cochrane-Nord, ces deux communautés, on se trouve pas mal majoritairement francophones. Il y a toujours la possibilité d'élire des francophones dans ces deux comtés-là parce que les francophones ont plus l'habilité de se présenter dans ces comtés-là et d'être acceptés par les électeurs.

1740

En allant avec un comté, comme ils vont faire avec Cochrane-Nord et Cochrane-Sud, quand ils vont avoir le nouveau comté de Timmins-James Bay, ça veut dire qu'on va avoir un seul comté au lieu de deux où on a la chance de gagner comme francophones. On peut dire la même chose pour le comté de Sudbury-Est et pour le comté de Nickel Belt. En diminuant les comtés dans le nord-est de l'Ontario au nombre que vous dites, ça veut dire qu'il va y avoir trois comtés de moins dans notre communauté du nord-est de l'Ontario pour les francophones d'avoir la chance de se faire élire.

Est-ce que ça veut dire que seulement des francophones ont besoin d'être élus ? Non, ce n'est pas la position que je prends. Je dis que c'est important que les francophones aient la chance de se présenter, qu'on puisse venir ici, qu'on puisse parler de la part de la communauté francophone et avoir l'habilité en nombre de tous les coins de la Chambre, conservateur, NPD, libéral, d'être capable de faire en sorte qu'on obtienne les services et milite pour les francophones et qu'ils vont avoir l'habilité aussi d'épanouir les services pour la communauté. Avec moins de députés, ça va devenir plus un problème. Je dis aux membres du gouvernement que c'est quelque chose dont vous avez besoin de prendre soin.

One of the things that needs to be said is that the government has the right to do redistribution, and that's not the argument here. I would say to the government simply this: If you want to change the boundaries and reduce the number of MPPs in Ontario, that's one thing. But traditionally, and also for good, legal reasons, we have done this process through a boundaries commission, and in its history approximately every 10 years the province has gone through a redistribution process by looking at the demographics of the areas within it, giving terms of reference to a boundaries commission to take a look at, in a fairly detailed way, what the new ridings should look like in the province.

In the past, in 1982 and I think prior to that in 1972, the boundaries commission was given terms of reference to take a look at those issues, to see what would be the best way to draw the boundaries and get good representation for the people of this province at the Legislature. What was important in 1973 and 1983, the most recent times this was done, the government of Ontario, then a Conservative government, said, "When you're doing this, there are a couple of things we want you to keep in mind."

The first thing they said was that we need to give terms of reference to the boundaries commission and that they should include that, when redistributing ridings, we need to look at the questions of community and diversity of interest, means of communication, topographical



features, what the population trends are, the varying of rural electoral districts, existing boundaries of municipalities or wards and special geographic considerations. All those considerations were taken into account when the commission went out and did its work.

They would come back to the Legislature, through the cabinet, and make a recommendation about what the new boundaries should look like in the end. Only after that fairly exhaustive process did we have legislation that we as legislators had looked at, that we as members had an opportunity to debate the details of. Then we would go out and do our own public hearings to make sure that the people of Ontario had an opportunity to look at the final result. Only after all that was there a final debate in the Legislature of Ontario.

The difference in what the province is doing here today is that they're basically saying: "We are moving, we are doing it. We are not going to take a look at any terms of reference. We are not going to listen to anybody's points of view other than those people who we believe have the same point of view as us. We're doing it because the federal government boundaries make sense." There's no opportunity for communities anywhere in Ontario to really have their say about what this means to them, and I say to the government that's wrong. There hasn't been, to my knowledge, an attempt by any provincial or federal government in Canada to move the way you have, to redesign all the boundaries within a particular area by a simple act of the Legislature or of the Parliament of Canada. It has always been done through a boundaries commission. In fact, in Ontario when we have gone through the boundaries commission process, the terms of reference also spoke to the issue of population densities.

For an example, in northern Ontario it was always agreed — and it was the Bill Davis government the last time it was done. They said there are 15 seats in north-eastern Ontario and those 15 seats must remain to give northern Ontarians an ability to have a voice at Queen's Park. It was done for a very good reason. If you look strictly at population levels within northern Ontario, an argument could possibly be made that we need less representation. But in reality you have to take geographic terms into consideration, as well as a need to have a sufficient ratio of MPPs at Queen's Park from the north, no matter what the political party, to represent the people of northern Ontario and to speak on their behalf.

But the government is not doing this in this legislation. They're saying: "We're going to go in and we're going to take five seats from northern Ontario. If you don't like it, too bad; that's just what we're going to do." I say to the government that that's wrong. That's not what we should be doing. We should be trying to do this in a way that makes some sense, to bring a bit of common sense to the process. But the government is not doing that. They are moving to a way of doing things that's quite heavy-handed.

In fact, at the committee hearings in the city of Timmins, which I had the honour of being able to go to, I listened to many presentations by the people who came there, only to be argued with by members of the government side. The member from Scarborough East — I was

surprised. Members of the community would come and present, and the minute there was a presentation that was opposed to what the government was doing, there was a combative attitude towards what those people were saying.

I don't expect the government to like what people say against them or the negative things they say about some of their policies. I was a member of a government and I understand that it is not a very comfortable feeling. But the difference is that governments in the past, our government and the Liberal government before that and the Bill Davis government even before that, always understood that people have the right to come and make their views known and that we as legislators should have respect and listen to what they have to say, not be combative with them about their particular point of view.

I was very shocked. Presenter after presenter who came before our committee and who had an opinion different from the government was badgered in questions by the member for Scarborough East and — I forget the riding — one of the other Conservative members as well. The same apparently happened in the community of Sault Ste Marie, from what I'm told.

I just say to the government members that people who come before a committee to present from our communities are not seasoned politicians, as we are; they're very intimidated by the process. It should be our responsibility to have the respect to hear what they have to say and give them the opportunity to express their views, and to politely thank them for coming out and giving us their views. If you're opposed and you have a question, you do that in a respectful way, but you don't beat them up.

I was really taken aback by that. People in my community had gone there and presented, and some of them were quite taken aback by what some of the members had to say, in regard to the combative attitude they took towards them. Sure, it's not easy for the government members to listen to how people in a constituency feel negative about their policies, but they have the right to give you that opinion, and second, you need to listen. Only by listening are we able to make legislation better and make government work better.

That is the crux of what this is all about. I want to say to the government that the real issue here, to me, is not reducing the number of politicians and it will make Queen's Park work better. Reducing the amount of MPPs at Queen's Park by 27 will only reduce the number by 27 and will save you money, apparently, in the neighbourhood of \$10 million, if you believe the government figures. If that's the only goal you have for doing this, then I guess you've got some motive for doing it. But if you're doing this, as you purport it to be, to deal with parliamentary reform and give members more of an opportunity to participate in debate and to be able to make the House work better, reducing members by 27 ain't going to do nothing. It's not going to do anything to make this place work better.

If you really want to get to the issue of how this Legislature works and you're truly serious as members about making this House work better for individual MPPs so that people can have confidence in our political system, we should be talking about real parliamentary



reform. I say to you as a New Democrat and I say to you proudly as a member of the New Democratic Party that I would be more than pleased to engage in such a debate with the members of the government, because I have had the opportunity, unlike many of you on the other side, to sit on both sides of this House. I understand how frustrating it often is for a backbencher member of the government to —

*Interjection.*

1750

**Mr Bisson:** Well, it is. Come on. I understand what it is for backbenchers in a government to feel powerless in regard to what the centre is saying, the Premier's office. I also understand, from the perspective of being a member in the opposition, how frustrating it is to see a government act by sheer majority, knowing at times that you're not able to affect in a positive way, as you see it, the legislation coming before us.

What we're really missing here, if the government were serious, is that what we should be trying to tackle is a way to increase the confidence of the people of our province in the political process. As much as this government wants to speak against politicians and the political process, it is this political process and our system of government that has given us a standard of living we have today. If it wasn't for the democracy we have today and our legislative democracy as we know it, the standard of living in the province of Ontario and the standard of living in this country would not be what we enjoy today.

We have, through Parliament and the Legislature, enacted numerous pieces of legislation to give people rights, to level the playing field in the economy so that people could participate within the economy and reap the benefits of it. Governments, because of the system of parliamentary democracy we have, have also been able to play a very important role in making our economy work. But what has happened over a period of time is that people have, because of the kind of language this government uses — and I say you're really purporting this — lost confidence in politicians and lost confidence in the system of democracy we have today. That doesn't serve us well. That doesn't serve our province well and it doesn't serve this Legislature well.

What the government should be doing is trying to attack that particular issue: How do we restore the confidence in the people of Ontario towards our political process? And how do we give people within our constituency a voice so that when they like or dislike what a government is doing, they know they can have some effect on the outcome of what the government policies are? If the government were to come before the House today or tomorrow or whenever it might be and say, "Yes, we are going to do this," I can tell you the New Democratic caucus would be there with you. We'd be working along with the government to find ways of making this Legislature work better.

I understand, through rumours, as I hear them through the halls of this Legislature, that the government is contemplating rule changes in the Legislature.

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton):** Rumour changes?

**Mr Bisson:** Rule changes; the standing orders. I'll tell you, we're spinning our wheels here. We're not really

dealing with the real issue. You're going to deal with rule changes to limit the ability of members of the opposition and members of the back bench to get into debate and speak out on behalf of their constituents. I don't see that as being particularly useful.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** You talk about rule changes. Who changed the rules more than anybody? You did. At least we can only speak for an hour and a half.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Grey-Owen Sound, come to order, please.

**Mr Bisson:** I can give you firsthand advice, because I was a member of a government that did rule changes. To tell you the truth, some of those rules I wish we hadn't done. I don't have any problem in saying that.

I say again that if the government is serious about making changes to restore confidence, I would be there with you. And what can we do? There are a number of things we can do. A good example is the way we push legislation through this Legislature. It's really preposterous, it's really nuts when you think about it. If a cabinet minister of the province of Ontario —

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** We can look at it.

**Mr Bisson:** Exactly. I know you agree.

The way it works now, the Minister of Municipal Affairs says, according to the Premier's office or whatever the inner cabinet says, "We want to pass legislation that will change the structure of the city of Toronto, the city of York and all those other communities and make it a Metro city." What will happen is that the minister will come in, he will draft a bill through legislative counsel within the ministry and within the Legislature itself, and present a bill here almost as a fait accompli. We know, as members of this Legislature, that it's never done right in the first place. There are always all kinds of problems.

The point is that then the government is put on the defensive automatically. The minute the government comes in and introduces a bill, it has to defend it. They can't stand there and criticize their own legislation because they might be seen as being weak. I say that's wrong. I think the sign of a strong government is a government that can say: "Maybe we got it wrong. Maybe the way that we looked at it was a bit off. Maybe Joe Public or Jane Public has a good suggestion about how to make this legislation better, and maybe even a member of the opposition or member of the back bench of the government has a great idea." I know, for example, that within the government benches some very learned members of the backbench had worked at municipal levels of government as planners —

**Mr Baird:** Name them.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm not going to name the members. There aren't enough of you. I was stretching it there a bit, all right?

The point I'm making is that there is expertise in this Legislature as you see nowhere else. We have a cross-section of people who sit in this Legislature representing ridings who have all kinds of expertise, all kinds of experience and all kinds of abilities they can bring to making legislation better.



But what happens? The government introduces a bill — and I don't care if it's Conservative, NDP or Liberal. It's the same story, right? They come in and they say, "I'm the Minister of Municipal Affairs and I would like to table this piece of legislation." The minute the bill drops on the centre table of the House, the government has to defend it and the opposition has to oppose it. It is nuts. It is absolutely nuts. Why don't we call a spade a spade?

Wouldn't we be better off talking in this Legislature about how we can change that process of introducing legislation so that the government maybe, as a possible suggestion, would come to the Legislature and say, "We, the cabinet of Ontario, through our Minister of Municipal Affairs, think we can save money if we were to restructure the city of Toronto, and we have a predisposed view that we should have one level called Metro," whatever it might be. "But here's some of the ideas we have. Here are some of the principles we have. Here are some of the numbers we have that back our argument, and we are tabling this for the clerks so a legislative committee can deal with drafting legislation based on some common sense for a change." Why don't we do that?

And then, members of the Legislature, I'll tell you what would happen: We would be fighting our way out that door to get to the committee so that we can speak out on behalf of our communities and on behalf of our parties. We would be adding constructively, I believe, to making legislation better because the government wouldn't have to defend the legislation and the opposition wouldn't necessarily have to oppose the legislation. The government and the opposition members could go to the legislative committee and bring forward points of view, engage in good clean debate, bring forward people able to present on all sides of the issue so we can get a good hearing about what good legislation would be on a particular issue.

It's not perfect. Listen, I don't pretend for a second that it would be a perfect system. But the beauty of it is that I think if we were to do that, many times legislation would come back into the Legislature that would be supported by all three parties. What a bonus that would be. The government would be able to, along with the opposition, come back to the Legislature and say, Madam Speaker — oh, very nice to see you in the chair, Margaret, very nice. I should explain that to viewers back home, but it's a long story and I don't want to get into it.

Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing, Madam Speaker, if the committee was then to come back to the Legislature and say, "We report from this particular committee a piece of legislation that has been worked on by all three parties of the Legislature and this is what we believe should be done," whatever the proper wording should be. And then we get —

**Mr Murdoch:** That's why we have private members' hour.

**Mr Bisson:** Exactly, and I'll come to that in a second. You're right. The member for Grey-Owen Sound is 100% right. You are right-wing, there's no question about that. You're certainly not left, I can tell you that.

The point is that we would come back to the Legislature and we would have a much better product in the end.

Members of the Legislature who didn't participate at the committee would then have an opportunity to debate the bill fully at second reading, again at third reading, and possibly committee, if it had to go back, and you might have, after that, a Legislature that works a little bit better. And you know what? The government still would get its way. The government in the end would still have the majority in the House to do what it wants, but it would be more forced to work with members of the opposition and all members in the House to make the legislation work better.

The member for Grey-Owen Sound raises the point, and I agree with him, that that's what happens normally at private members' hour. One of the only times during the weekly sittings that the Legislature works in a half-decent way, as far as I'm concerned, is private members' hour. A member stands, he or she in her place and says, "I have a bill," as you did, Madam Speaker, with drunk driving. You brought a bill into this Legislature to deal with fines and other issues in regard to drunk driving because you had a genuine concern, and it's a issue that we know in this Legislature you have felt strongly about for many years. I'm sure you were lobbied by many people and you met with many constituents, stakeholders. Are they special interest groups? But that's another thing.

In the end, you brought your bill here and the members of the Legislature debated it. You don't often get into partisan debate at private members' hour; that's not the intent. The intent is to deal with the bill and move the bill on. I can remember a private member's bill that the minister responsible for women's issues, Mrs Cunningham, brought when we were in government. There are all kinds of good ideas that come by.

Why don't we do that? That's one of the reasons I have a real problem supporting what you're doing under the Fewer Politicians Act. The Fewer Politicians Act will do absolutely nothing to make this place work better. If it does anything — well, I don't think it'll make it work worse. It wouldn't be fair to say that. But it won't make it work better. I think it's a bit of a draw. The downside is that people will have less access to their MPPs.

#### 1800

The other issue we could be taking a look at, as well as changing the committee structure and giving committees more power, is, why don't we get into a debate about proportional representation? I know that's a very bold step for the province of Ontario to take, if we should ever decide to go to proportional representation. The members in this House know this, but I don't think members of the public know: I'm not talking rep by pop — that's a different thing altogether — but moving to a system of proportional representation such as exists in places like Germany, now in New Zealand and other countries that have long understood that in a system of Parliament such as we have with multiple parties, it is always conceivable, in fact most of the time it happens, that a government gets elected with less than 50% of the vote. I was a member of a government that had 34% or 36% of the popular support in the election of 1990. We had 34% or 36% of the support of the people of the province and we got to form a majority government? There's something wrong.



**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** It doesn't make sense.

**Mr Bisson:** It doesn't make sense. You're members of a government that was supported by 42% of the people of Ontario. That's better than 36% but it's not 50%. Why do we have this system where we say that as long as you have more MPPs on this side of the House, you're automatically the government? It doesn't necessarily mean that you got a majority of votes in the province. Why don't we look at what they've gone in New Zealand? Members are always fond of talking about the Internet and about telecommunications. Punch up on the Internet what they've done in New Zealand, which started in — is it starting in 1997 or have they already had their election?

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs Margaret Marland):** I'd like to remind the member for Cochrane South to address your remarks through the Chair and try to resist the temptation to respond to comments across the floor.

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker

Why don't we as members of this Legislature deal with the question of looking at the possibility of moving to proportional representation? Here's how it works. It's quite simple. Well, it's quite simple but it's a little bit complicated to explain. But how it works is simply this: What happens at the end of the election is that if a party has 38% of the vote, they get 38% of the seats in the Legislature. Let's work our way through the structure to see what would have happened. In the election of 1990, the Bob Rae NDP government would have been formed but they would have been in effect a minority government. We would have had 36% or 38% of the seats in the House and the two opposition parties would have split according to whatever their percentage of the vote was last time. In this case, in 1995 with the Mike Harris government, I believe you won with 42%, Madam Speaker?

**Mr Crozier:** No, no, they were closer to 38%.

**Mr Bisson:** The member is saying 38%, the Tories? I thought it was around 40%.

**Mr Crozier:** I'll go get the figures.

**Mr Bisson:** Anyway, let's say it's 40%, just for the sake of argument. I've got 60%, but that's —

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** It'll be a lot less the next time.

**Mr Bisson:** What would have happened in the last election of 1995 is that the Harris Conservatives would have formed a government on that side of the House, but the difference is that they would have had approximately 40% of the seats in the Legislature; the Liberals, who had the next amount of votes, would have got about 30% of the seats; and we in the NDP would have had the balance, which was about 22% when the election was done. What that does is that it virtually forces the government to work with the opposition parties, because very seldom would any government be formed with more than 50% of the vote. It would be almost impossible to do in a multiparty system such as we have, with three main-stream parties being represented at the polls.

I put that idea forward because I think it's one of the ways that we're able to deal with the whole question of how we represent people here in the House. Let's explore what would happen under proportional representation.

A controversial bill that our government put forward was the Long-Term Care Act. I remember that members of both the Liberal and the Conservative opposition were very upset when our government moved to introduce long-term-care legislation in Ontario. It would have forced us, as a government, because we wouldn't have had a clear majority of members in the House, to work with either one of the opposition parties or a combination of members in those parties to develop legislation that would have broad enough support to be passed in the Legislature.

**Mr Crozier:** Sounds like common sense to me.

**Mr Bisson:** Yes, it sounds like common sense to me. If you take a look at the government, for example, when the government introduced Bill 26, the omnibus bill, last fall at this time the government would never have been able to do that because they would have needed the majority of the people of the House to support it.

What does that do? It does a couple of things. I think that first it tempers the government. It tempers a socialist-ideological government like mine and a right-wing-ideological government like yours. It forces us to look at: "How can we get this through? How can we make this work in some way that'll have enough broad support in the House that we're able to pass the legislation?" That would force the government of the day to work with the opposition parties to find some kind of compromise, and I don't think compromise would be a bad thing.

I think one of the things we're suffering from in our political process today is that over at least the last 10 years, if not longer, the province has been going through this to-ing and fro-ing of governments changing and going through a turmoil. We go from kicking out a right-wing, right-of-centre government under the Tories and move to another right-of-centre government — maybe some would argue a little bit left — the Liberal government of David Peterson, we move to the left-wing government of Bob Rae and back to a right-wing government of Mr Harris, and in the meantime the public is caught up in that.

The problem you get I think creates a lot of instability within our society. We need to find some way in our modern democracy today to try to control that ebb and flow to a certain extent so we don't have the vast changes in public policy that I think are hurtful to people. I would say that our government and your government are probably the two most idealistic to ever have formed governments in Ontario. Between our government as a left-wing, left-of-centre party and yours as a fairly right-wing party vast differences in public policies are being changed, and the people are caught up in it. Good, bad or indifferent, liking or disliking right-wing politics has nothing to do with our left-wing politics. The point I make is that the public is the pawn in this. The pawns are the public. They're the ones who are having to pay for our idealistic beliefs and the massive changes in public policy.

I argue that moving to a system of proportional representation would force the government of the day to work with the opposition parties to try to temper its position in regard to workfare in this particular case, the



tax break or whatever piece of legislation it is, so that it has broad enough support. What's wrong with that?

Governments are a funny thing, and your government is no different from mine. You're not supposed to divulge what's said at caucus, so I'd better keep that quiet. What I'm trying to get at is that if we can't pass the test of the Legislature in passing legislation through by having people of different ideological beliefs and people of different points of view buy in, how do we expect the public to buy into this stuff? I think it would be fairly difficult.

The government should take a look at bringing forward proportional representation. It's not easy. It would be a departure from what we have today. It would certainly be confusing at the beginning, but if we, as governments and opposition parties, really tried to deal with this in some sort of structured fashion that made sense, I think in the end the public would see the merit of it.

I was surprised when about a month ago I was invited to be the guest speaker at a conference of certified general accountants in my riding. They were in from all over northeastern Ontario. One of the questions they asked me was: "Listen, we went from the NDP government to the Harris Conservative government and possibly back to an NDP government again and we're going through this massive change of public policy. What can we do to deal with that?" When I raised the idea of making changes in how legislative committees work, possibly, or going to proportional representation — these were right-wing ideologues, most of them, not left-wingers — they sat there and said: "Jeez, that makes real common sense." Wouldn't that be nice, having a system that works a little bit better? It's a little like the private sector tries to do in some cases.

I say to the government that we should take a look at real parliamentary reform and not do strictly electoral reform that in the end is not going to do anything to make this place work better. I believe there's hardly a member in this Legislature who would disagree with me on that point. The problem is that we're all a little afraid to bring that forward because it's a very large departure from what we do today.

1810

One thing we know on all sides of the House is that we would like to play a stronger role. Members of the government would like to be able to come on behalf of their constituents and say, "Listen, Mike," or whoever it is, "I've got a problem with this; I need to find a way to make this work for my community," and members of the opposition would like to do the same. What's wrong with that? It would only make government, in the end, work a lot better.

If the government is really not doing parliamentary reform, what is it doing? They're doing electoral reform. That's what you're doing here, strictly electoral reform, which is not going to do anything to make this place work better. The government argues that by going to electoral reform it's going to be able to do a couple of things. They say that having larger ridings is going to save the government some money because we'll have fewer MPPs. I wonder how much money we're really going to save.

I'll give you the example of Cochrane South and Cochrane North. In the next provincial election we will have one riding. It'll be called Timmins-James Bay. Presently it is staffed up by two MPPs with their staff. Mr Len Wood in Cochrane North has, I believe, three people on staff in his constituency and I have three people on staff in my constituency. Come next election there's only going to be one of us, which means that people are going to have less access to our offices, because nobody is talking about increasing our budgets at this point. If you do, it's going to end up costing us more money anyway, so what are you saving? That is the point I'm getting at. But from a service perspective, people in our ridings are going to have less of an ability to contact the member to deal with an issue.

The other thing in regard to electoral reform is that I don't think you're taking into account what it means for these communities, and I'll use our ridings as an example. I believe that Mr Len Wood, the member for Cochrane North, and myself, the member for Cochrane South, give good service to our constituents, as did the members before us. One was a Tory and the other one was a Liberal. We believe in doing that because that's the reason we come to these jobs. We care about our communities, we care passionately about issues and we're there in order to be able to advance those issues, represent our constituents and help them along the way.

Come next election you're going to have one member. Here's the problem we're going to have: If the member is elected from the area that is now Cochrane South or the area that is now Cochrane North, he or she will have to have a constituency office somewhere.

**Mr Len Wood:** But where?

**Mr Bisson:** Where will it be? That's what the member for Cochrane North says. That's the point.

**Mr Len Wood:** We'll have both. We'll have Cochrane-Timiskaming and Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr Bisson:** Exactly. We're going to have very little bit of resources. I don't know how it's going to be done unless the government is prepared to address the idea of finances. All I know is that on the given budget I have as an MPP there is no way you can staff up to the level we do now two constituency offices in Kapuskasing and Timmins, and that's wrong. You can't take an office out of Kapuskasing and out of Timmins. In many cases it's the only access people have to their provincial government. So the government is going to have to increase our budget. Whoever the new member in Timmins-James Bay is going to be, they'd better be prepared to spill in about another \$80,000 a year — actually more than that; they're going to have to put a minimum of \$150,000 in the budgets with the new electoral boundaries to make sure we're able to provide service to people in both ends of the constituency.

The other issue is that whoever the member is, from Cochrane North or Cochrane South, travel is going to be much more expensive. The government argues — listen to the logic here — that it's going to be less expensive because we'll have fewer MPPs causing fewer expenses. If either I or Mr Wood is the member in the next riding, we've still got to go to Kapuskasing, to Hearst, to Timmins, to Attawapiskat, and to the point that we do



now. We're going to end up having to incur expenses anyway. We're still going to have to drive the car, his truck, whoever the member is at the time, up and down the highway to service those constituents. We're still going to have to buy airplane tickets to get up to Attawapiskat or Moosonee or wherever it might be. You're not going to save a whole bunch of money. The government will have some expenses going up.

You say you're doing this to save money. What money are you really saving in the end? The government looks at the numbers from the best possible scenario. They say 27 MPPs plus their staff equals \$11 million: money saved. You don't talk about, in that \$11 million, having to reinvest back into MPPs' budgets money to service constituencies. In our constituency, which is two that will be down to one, you'll have to increase the MPP's budget for office staff, for constituency offices and telephones and all the things that are needed to run an office and you'll have to increase the budget to be able to deal with driving and transportation in the riding. If you don't, how are you expected to run from Hearst to Kapuskasing to Smooth Rock Falls to Timmins and Attawapiskat? We can't go out there and rent sled dogs. Even they eat dog food. You've got to pay for it somehow. So I say to the members opposite, I say to the government, if you're talking about saving money, in many cases you're not going to save money; it will actually cost more money.

I would argue that by having one MPP you'll probably end up spending a little bit more money in a place like Timmins-James Bay than you would now. Either that or the member doesn't take his or her responsibility and doesn't service those constituencies. That's not what I plan to do and I'm sure that's not what Mr Wood would intend on doing should he or I become the member for that next riding. I say to the members opposite, you can't come here and argue strictly that you're going to save a whole bunch of money by being able to come to this.

The other thing I just want to say from a personal perspective is that members of the government — not members of the government only; this would be unfair — members in urban ridings have to understand that in ridings such as ours it is a fairly difficult task to get around and service those ridings. By reducing the amount of MPPs, it's really going to put a fairly large amount of stress on members and their families, because we're going to be required to be away from home quite a bit more than we are now.

I want to quote to you from a presentation that was made by Mr René Fontaine, a previous member for Cochrane North, who came to our committee in Timmins to speak on that particular issue. I just explained that Mr Fontaine was the member for Cochrane North for five years. As a cabinet minister of that particular government, he was required to travel a lot, between his responsibilities as a cabinet minister and as an MPP, within that riding, all of which took a toll. It took a toll on him and it took a toll on his family, and when he heard that the committee was coming to Timmins to talk about making the ridings bigger, he came before us and he said to us a number of things in regard to what he thought that would mean on a personal basis. I just want to repeat this because I think it's worth saying. We're afraid to stand

up here and say, "We politicians are humans too and we would like, at the end of the day, to have an opportunity to be with our families, to have supper, to see our children grow, to spend quality time with our spouses, to be members of a family that is somewhat functional."

These jobs, as it is now, are fairly difficult. The demands — I think all members would agree with me — on our families for us doing this job are tremendous. We put our spouses in stress, we put our children in stress, because we're always required to be away — not always, but quite a bit — because of our jobs. If you represent a riding such as mine or such as Mr Wood's, Mr Martin's or Mr Pouliot's, the time away from our spouses is even greater because of where we live. I have to travel down here. Either I need to drive down on Sunday or I've got to fly out on Monday morning and be gone from my family for four to five days during the week when the Legislature sits, because that's what I'm paid to do. I chose to do this. I'm not complaining, but I expect that the province of Ontario, as any employer, will give me some consideration as a member and say, "Yes, you have the right to expect to have some time with your family." That's what Mr Fontaine spoke to. It's fairly strong language, but none the less it needs to be put on the record. He said:

"I came over here to tell you it's inhuman for this riding the way it's going to be. Inhuman. Immoral on top of that. I'm telling you, a young MPP with family, she won't survive" — he's referring to the spouse in this particular case — "it'll be a divorce. We don't sleep home every night and we've got a hard time to sleep home on the weekend when we do come home because on the way through from Cochrane to Smooth Rock Falls to Kap I had to stop in Val Rita for a 50th anniversary."

So possibly he would stay over at night. He'd come home on Saturday night and would end up having to leave the next day at 12. Both he and another MPP, Mr Bill Ferrier, who came before us, who was the member for Cochrane South from 1967 to 1977, talked about the personal points about this. If you're expecting MPPs to have to service larger ridings, it will take a larger toll on those MPPs and their families, and if the Mike Harris government says it doesn't care about families and it doesn't care that it's going to be greater stress on those families, I say shame on Mike Harris, because that's what this is going to do. For the name of what? For saving a few dollars.

The member might shake his head, but the reality is that it's true. If you've got a larger riding, you're going to be drawn away a lot more, and if you're drawn away a lot more, it puts a larger stress on family. As a member who's been around this place for a while, I am privileged to be here. I really enjoy the work I do and I wouldn't want to give it up for anything else. But what I do expect in return, because I get it from my constituents, is the respect to spend some time with my family. My constituents have been excellent about that, because they understand the work I do. But I also expect that respect from the government, and when I see the government moving in the way that it is now to diminish the number of ridings in the name of being able to save a few bucks, listen, in the end it is going to have a personal effect on people.



1820

Another point that I think needs to be made is demystifying what this really means in the grand scheme of things. The government says, "We're going to do this because if we match the boundaries of the federal ridings, things are going to be a heck of a lot better. Boy, it's going to work real good, because we're going to have the same boundaries and everybody's going to know who their MPP is and everybody's going to know who their MP is and we're all going to be able to work better together and it's going to be altogether a much better thing."

On the first point, what we do at the federal level and what we do at the provincial level are different things. It doesn't matter if it's a Liberal who's my federal counterpart in Timmins-Chapleau or in Timiskaming or if it's a New Democrat, because I've had both. We don't deal with federal members as much as people would think we do; that's the reality. I've been there as a member of a government, with members of opposite parties and the same party as mine, and as a member of the opposition. The issues we deal with are completely separate, and I'll tell you, we get a lot more issues to deal with provincially than they do federally.

Our federal members deal with unemployment insurance, Canada pension, passports, immigration. Those are the big issues they deal with. But how often do people need passports? Once in their lifetime. How often do people need to deal with immigration? Probably never, unless they're immigrating to Canada. How often do people need to deal with unemployment insurance? Not as often, thankfully, as we would think.

But provincial members deal with a multitude of issues. We deal with workers' compensation, we deal with problems in the health care system, we deal with the General Welfare Assistance Act, we deal with the Family Benefits Act, we deal with a multitude of issues having to do with how you get a birth certificate; you name it, we do it. There is a much heavier workload. For government members to make a comment, as the member for Scarborough East did, that, "I don't expect it to be any different to the federal member than the provincial member," we don't do the same thing. We have a much larger caseload than federal members do.

The other thing I would like to point out is that we have to also recognize that the federal process for redesigning the boundaries was flawed. I've had this discussion with Mr Thalheimer, a federal member, and I've had this discussion with Mr Serré, the member for Timiskaming, and they themselves recognize, as federal Liberals, that the process we are going to go through with the new boundaries is flawed. They've had their problems being able to get this amended because of the problems they were having in the Senate at the time, but the point is that the way that the boundaries have been redistributed, even under the federal boundaries, doesn't make a lot of sense.

I'll give you an example. In the riding federally that is part of the provincial riding I represent, the community of Iroquois Falls is tied in with the community of Timmins. Under the new boundaries, we lose Iroquois Falls. Iroquois Falls is going to become a part of the riding to

the south, which is Timiskaming, and Timmins is going to be folded in with areas from Smooth Rock Falls going north on Highway 11. Members federally have made the point to me that it's nuts to carve Iroquois Falls out of the riding, because Iroquois Falls and Timmins have a link.

People come to Timmins to see doctors, people come to Timmins to be able to deal with government officials, people come to Timmins to go shopping at times. People come to Timmins to buy insurance. They come to Timmins for all kinds of reasons because we're sort of the regional area. To take Iroquois Falls and to tie it in with Kirkland Lake — people don't go that way unless they're going to Toronto. They don't stop in Kirkland Lake. If you get in your car and you get on Highway 101 and drive south towards Highway 11, you're not driving there to go to Kirkland Lake, by and large; you're going to Toronto.

So why take Iroquois Falls out of the riding? The federal members themselves recognize that it's a problem. Just because the Liberals got it wrong federally, why should Mike Harris allow the federal government to dictate bad boundaries to the province of Ontario? It's ludicrous. Since when did Ontario give away its power to decide what its boundaries are to the federal government? I've never heard of that in any jurisdiction. The federal government got it wrong in the first place.

The second thing you also have to recognize is that the federal government which made the changes to the federal boundaries that we're going to be under come the next election, when it came to Ontario increased the number of seats, not decreased the amount of seats in Ontario. Under the present boundaries federally, we have 99 federal members sitting in the House of Commons for Ontario. Under the new boundaries that will be coming up come the next election federally, we're going to have 103. We've increased the number of MPs in Ontario in regard to the House of Commons. In Ontario, we're doing quite the opposite. We will be the only province in Canada that has an equal amount of MPPs to the amount of MPs.

Every other province in the country — British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and going east — has more MPPs than it has federal members for a very good reason: because you need to give representation to the different regions of your provincial jurisdiction because you deal with many more issues, as I said earlier, than the federal government does. But this government is allowing the federal Liberal government of Mr Chrétien to dictate to Ontario what our boundaries should be. I say to our provincial government, they're wrong. We shouldn't absolve our responsibility to do that.

The other thing I say is that if you were to follow that argument all the way through and you were to say, "All right, we should all have coterminous boundaries," should the municipalities have coterminous boundaries with the provincial ridings? Should there be only one mayor for the entire riding of Timmins-James Bay? Should there be no municipalities other than one in the riding? Of course not, because municipalities deal with far more issues than we do in some cases. They're dealing with the everyday issues of has the road been plowed, are the sewers



working, is the school yard safe, community policing, fire services etc. We recognize that at the municipal level of government we have smaller geographical boundaries when it comes to municipal wards to be able to represent the people within those communities.

Now, should we have fewer municipal politicians, should we have fewer MPPs or fewer federal MPs? I'm not so sure if we'll get anything of it, but I say to the government, listen, if you want to get into the debate, do it through the process of an electoral boundaries commission; don't do it through the process you're using now. I think you're wrong in doing that. Just because the federal government got it wrong doesn't mean to say that we have to copy the same mistakes. Send it to a boundaries commission and get them to do the job properly.

The other point I would like to make is what it means for northern Ontario. It struck me, it was clear as day as we sat on the legislative committee in Timmins and it was clear as day today as I listened to the member for Scarborough East speak on this bill, that we have a problem in northern Ontario and we've had a problem for years in making sure that the provincial government listens to the people of the north and gives people the opportunity to be able to determine their own way they're going to do things in regard to northern Ontario.

This government is going to be moving to reduce the number of MPPs in the northern part of the province by five, which means we're going to have less ability to be able to have our voices heard here. It also means we're going to have less of an ability to have members in cabinet as governments are elected, because there will be fewer MPPs to choose from. I'll tell you, in northern Ontario we understand far too well the importance of making sure we have strong representation.

I know southern members hate it when northerners come down to Toronto and start talking about what's important in the north, but I think one thing you've learned as government members is that no matter what the political party is, and I will say this, members from northern Ontario play a very strong role in this Legislature because we understand the importance of making sure that our voices are heard, and we play a fairly active role in the Legislature. But diminish our numbers and it will become much more difficult for us to be able to bring that voice to Queen's Park.

We in northern Ontario have argued for years that the provincial government needs to give special consideration to the north for a number of reasons: because of our geography, because of the demographics, because of our economy, because of the culture. We need to get special consideration, as does the city of Toronto, when it comes to legislation here in Ontario, as does Kingston. But by reducing the number of northern MPPs, you're going to do nothing to advance issues in northern Ontario.

I just want to say to you that there was not too long ago, I think some 20 years ago, but maybe not that long, maybe 15 years ago, a very strong movement in the north that was headed up by a man from North Bay by the name of Ed Deibel, who basically tried to head up a movement to separate the north from the south. I don't subscribe to that view. I believe that as northerners we're better off to be part of the family of Ontario and it's

better to try to find processes within Ontario to make things work better for us in the north.

But there was a very strong movement 15 years ago on the part of this particular individual to sign people up to a new political party that saw as its mandate to advocate separation of northern Ontario from the province of Ontario. There were a lot of people in the north who supported that. At first I think people looked at it in a bit of a whimsical way, but eventually people started to say: "Yeah, we don't get a fair shake from Queen's Park. We look at the amount of money spent in transportation, and they get far more money than us." Northerners said, "We understand there are more people living in southern Ontario when it comes to population, but the road system in northern Ontario is huge in comparison to the south because of the geography."

#### 1830

People look at the map of Ontario and they never realize something: You look on the one side and you see southern Ontario; then you flip the map over, and you see this thing that's called northern Ontario and it looks about the same size as the south. To give you a perspective, we can take the entire area of southwestern Ontario and fit it into my new riding, from Sarnia all the way up to past Toronto, probably up to Oshawa, and from the Great Lakes working its way up to probably halfway between Barrie and North Bay. You can take all of southern Ontario and fit it into the northeast and lose it, because the north is a very huge place.

People said back then: "Yeah, we're not getting a fair shake. When the government spends money on transportation, it should send a few extra dollars our way in order to be able to upgrade our roads so we have a good road system so we can do commerce, so that we can visit ourselves, we can deal with other communities, we can go see our doctors when we need to when it comes to medical attention." They said: "Listen, we want the government to spend money when it comes to the question of health care. Why should I as a northerner living in Timmins or Attawapiskat" — or wherever it might be — "have to always fly to Toronto every time I need some sort of a medical process?"

We argued and we argued, and we fought and we fought. People like Bill Ferrier and Alan Pope and me and others fought to be able to bring medical service to northern Ontario, to where today we have a fairly good system of health care in the north. We have the premier cardiovascular hospital in Sudbury, which the government is going to shut down, but that's another story for another day. The point is that we argued long and hard to be able to advocate special consideration for the north so that we can get the same crack at services as people do in southern Ontario. Finally we started to get people to listen to us.

Bill Davis saw this move that was happening with Mr Deibel out of North Bay and saw this whole move to separate the north from the south. At that time, there were a lot of Tory MPPs in northern Ontario — Alan Pope and a whole bunch of other people who were northerners; I think you probably had the majority of seats at the time — and all of a sudden they started saying, "Jeez, if we don't pay attention to northern Ontario we're going to



be in deep trouble up there politically." So they started to give us special consideration, and the government started investing, under the Tories, under the Liberals and under the NDP, in our communities to develop better infrastructures, to make sure that we have good health care, to make sure that we have good educational systems.

Eventually that movement died, but it wasn't by accident; it died because government started to pay attention. But I'll tell you, when you go to northern Ontario today I am shocked just how much things have changed in the past year. There's a member, the federal member from Timiskaming, Mr Serré, who was at a rally not too long ago — I think it was in Temagami — who just in a speech made a comment about separating the north from the south. Basically, 1,000 people there stood and gave him a standing ovation. They went nuts.

You know what? I got phone calls in my constituency office, and I'm sure that he got some as well, the member from Thunder Bay. We got telephone calls in our constituency offices, people saying: "How do I get one of them cards? How do we separate?" We as northern members said: "Hang on a second. We need to work within the system. We need to make sure that we get Mike Harris to listen to us. Separating the north from the south might not be a good idea." But people are starting to get the idea that maybe that's what we should do.

When government comes forward and says, "We're going to cut winter road maintenance," as you did last year, where we're seeing accidents in northern Ontario increase to the point I've never seen before, road conditions deteriorate; when you see the reduction of expenditures in health care — I can tell you in the district of Cochrane, the hospitals from Timmins, Matheson going north, we've lost about \$4 million in institutional care. The Minister of Health stands in the House and says, "Ah, but we're reinvesting it in community health care." I asked the minister an order paper question, and what did I get back? I said, "How much money have you cut in health care last year in the institutions and hospitals in the Cochrane district, and how much have you reinvested?" Some \$4 million was taken out. Do you know how much was reinvested? About \$400,000. I'm not a rocket scientist, but it tells me it's going to be more difficult with that direction for people to get services when it comes to health care.

The same can be said about education. I met with the separate school board not too long ago, and I've had discussions with the public school boards as well, about how they're going to adapt to the changes the government is making when it comes to reductions and expenditures. They're cancelling the purchase of computers for the classroom because with the cuts they can't afford to buy them. They're having to reduce the number of staff they need to maintain the facilities, so that facilities are going to start deteriorating with time. Not today, not this minute, but with time they will. They're going to have to reduce the number of teachers; either that or the government's going to have to give them a bill, which I will oppose if it does it, that guts the collective agreements of teachers.

All of this towards trying to eliminate a few dollars to be able to give a few people a tax break, and what do we

get in the end? You wonder why people in northern Ontario are mad at this government. I don't think it's a secret; somebody said this earlier in a speech. It's no secret that the Tories didn't elect Conservatives in northern Ontario. I think the north saw what was coming. People picked up the Common Sense Revolution, read it and went, "Not for me."

I've got to tell you this story; it's my favourite story of the last election. I'm not going to use names because it wouldn't be fair. I'm out canvassing and I'm in one of the smaller communities in my riding and I go knocking at the door, right? I knock at the door and the woman says: "Come on in, Gilles. What do you have to say?" I say, "It's election time." I gave her my pitch. She says to me: "Oh, Gilles, no, I can't vote for you. I'm mad at Bob Rae so I'm going to be voting for Mike Harris because he's going to give me a job. I'm on welfare, you see, and I want to get off of welfare. I hear him saying he's going to create workfare and I'm going to get myself a job. So I don't want to have nothing to do with you and the NDP. I'm mad at you and I'm mad Bob Rae." Okay, fine; I leave. About three weeks later I come back running back through that part of the riding again. I noticed there had been a Conservative sign there when I went the first time. I go back and the Conservative sign is gone. So I say, "Gee, what happened?" "Gilles, give me an NDP sign. I just read the Common Sense Revolution." That's what I think a lot of people in northern Ontario finally did; they picked up the Common Sense Revolution and they said: "Look what these guys are going. They're dismantling government."

We understand in northern Ontario that government is not an evil, bad, vile thing; government is actually something positive. If you want to have healthy communities, and you want to have communities that work for people, there has to be an "engagement," as we say in French, by the part of the government to provide those services to the people of the province. If we don't have good government and we don't have good programs, our communities fall apart. We understand that. Do you think the economy of northern Ontario would survive today if it was not for the active involvement on the part of governments provincially and federally, as we know it today?

The economy of northern Ontario was developed, how? If you look at the history, the T and O Railway, which was something that was designed by the provincial government back early on at the beginning of the century with government money, was a tool to do economic development. As they pushed the rail line north, with government dollars, what did we do? We ended up discovering all kinds of resources when it came to mining. We started looking at how we could better exploit the use of our forests. There was economic development out of that.

Once the railroad was in the government said: "We need to build schools because people are going to go work in those places and they want to live there and they want their children to be educated. That costs money and it's not the private sector that's going to do it." Do you think that the mines in Cobalt or Kirkland Lake or Timmins were going to go out and build schools for the



good of it, because they wanted to attract employees to their communities? No, government had to do it. That's the role of government. It's not a question of having a little corner school house or a one-room school house with a potbelly stove in the corner where children learn to read all out of the same book. It costs money to run schools. You have to have a facility that lends itself to education, you have to have books, you have to have computers, you have to have trained professionals, all of which are functions of government.

This government would make us believe, as it does through this bill, that government is unimportant: "Get rid of a whole bunch of MPPs. Everything's going to get better." It's not going to get better. Government can play and has to play a positive role in our communities, and we in northern Ontario understand that. I believe that's one of the reasons why consistently since the election (a) you didn't elect any members other than the Premier and (b) you haven't done well in the polls up there. People in the north understand that. They understand that the government can and must play a vital role when it comes to economic development.

1840

My good friend Sylvie Doucette at the Timmins Economic Development Corp — we are not of the same political party; she is of yours — but she understands —

**Mr Beaubien:** A great lady.

**Mr Bisson:** Yes, she is a great lady. I think Sylvie does a great job.

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** Does Alan Pope understand?

**Mr Bisson:** I'm not going to speak for Alan. I think Alan wouldn't have very nice things to say about you guys.

Anyway, the point I'm getting at is that she understands that economic development doesn't happen on its own. We in the city of Timmins established an economic development office that is funded and run by the city of Timmins through a board. It is government dollars through the municipality that pay for the activity of the economic development corporation of the city of Timmins. Why? Because it's important that we are able to facilitate people to come to our community and to show them what we have to offer to them, to put them in contact with other entrepreneurs in our community, to raise investment, to open the doors and show them where they need to go when it comes to dealing with government. They understand that it takes public dollars quite often to get private sector dollars to be invested in our communities.

I was proud as a member of a government from 1990 to 1995 that saw huge sums of private sector dollar investments in our communities across my riding, almost \$1 billion. I'm not kidding. Placer Dome, a \$150-million investment — it turned out to be about \$165 million — the expansion of the waferboard mill at Mallette, a brand-new expansion of an OSB plant; the expansion of the TMP plant in Iroquois Falls at Abitibi-Price; the tertiary treatment plant that we put in place in Iroquois Falls; the Northland Power project that we put in place in Iroquois Falls; the Mallette granite facilities. The list goes on and on.

Those were private sector dollars that came to our community. But they happened how? Not because the government willed it. No, I don't want to delude people into believing that. But the government played, through the economic development offices and through my office, a very key role in being able to facilitate those investments and make those things happen. I would argue that if it wasn't for the activities of people in the economic development office and people like myself through my own constituency office as the provincial member, many of those investments wouldn't have happened.

So when government says, "Government is bad. We should get out of the face of business. We should let business do things on its own," quite frankly a lot of things wouldn't happen. The private sector would not invest to the degree that it invested in northern Ontario because it is a simple fact that geography — the distances from major markets — is a difficulty for northern Ontario entrepreneurs to market the goods they produce or the services they sell. Government has to play a role in supporting the infrastructure of making things work. We need to make sure that we have a good airline system so that business people and people who work in their companies are able to travel to and from our communities at a reasonable rate. It is much more expensive now, I would add, with the onset of privatization of airlines.

I said yesterday in another debate that under Air Canada, a publicly owned airline that was federally regulated by the government, we could fly return to Timmins for \$180 on a DC-9 jet, and they supplied you the meal. Now we spend \$600 on a privately owned carrier, a Dash-8. I like the Dash-8, it's a nice little aircraft, but I'll tell you, I'm used to it. A lot of people I see, when they get on the plane, say: "This is not a jet. Kind of small, isn't it?" It has an effect of scaring off people who may come and invest in our communities.

You have to have a good system of highways so that you can move to and from our communities materials we need for producing and exchanging goods and when it comes to the production and the selling of those materials. You need to have a good system of telecommunications. I'll tell you, the private sector on its own would not develop a system of communications in northeastern Ontario. That's why the government, through the ONTC, invested heavily in long-distance services.

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** What does that have to do with Bill 81?

**Mr Bisson:** Listen, it wouldn't happen. We don't have the population base in many communities to afford the same kind of services you get in downtown Toronto. Fibre optics wouldn't happen on its own unless government played some role. What I'm saying to the government is that people in northern Ontario understand that government can and must and shall play an important role in helping our communities along, in levelling the playing field, as we may say, between northern and central and southern Ontario so that we could compete on an equal footing.

We also understand in the north that at times government must regulate. One of the things this government is so proud of talking about is the undoing of all of the regulations that exist in the province of Ontario in regard



to the environment, in regard to labour and many, many other issues that the government members and the members of the private sector see as a hindrance to investment. But if we don't regulate to a certain extent, you're going to have a free-for-all.

There are all kinds of examples, Madam Speaker, as you well know as the critic for environment for our party, of how the environment has been laid to waste in the name of making a profit. Does it make sense to do that? Sometimes both economically and ecologically it makes no sense. So we must regulate to a certain extent what happens. We must make sure that people take their responsibilities and we must make sure if they don't, we're able to deal with them in some way to be able to bring them under some form of control. But this government says, no, leave it all to the private sector. I say to the government, that's wrong. Government must and shall play an important role when it comes to levelling the playing field and regulating what happens within sectors in the province, so I would like to make that point.

As I say to the members opposite, really what this government is doing is moving on a platform of electoral reform. It is saying, "We are doing this because we don't believe in government, we believe smaller government is better and we believe less government is even better than that." You're moving on this bill by saying if you eliminate MPPs by 27 in Ontario things will be better. Well, I say to you, you're wrong. It is not going to do anything to be able to deal with making this House work better.

As I said earlier, if you were serious about making this House work better, you would deal with the real questions of parliamentary reform, you would deal with how legislative committees work in this Legislature, trying to find a way to make the Legislature work in a little bit less of a non-partisan way, and you have the power to be able to do that, and we would possibly look at moving into a system of proportional representation.

The other thing I say to the government is that if you're going to move forward with this kind of legislation you have, it is a great mistake to do it in the way you have, to just bring a bill into this House. You are basically as a government saying, "I give the power to Jean Chrétien and the federal Liberals in Ottawa to decide what the constituencies shall be in Ontario because I will mirror his boundaries." I don't, for one, accept that the federal government has jurisdiction in deciding what the boundaries should be in the province. If the government wants to change the boundaries, fine, but do it through a boundaries commission. That's the way you've got to do it.

Let people have their say in communities across the province, give it terms of reference, and then bring it back to this House so we can introduce it as legislation so that a bit of common sense comes into play when it comes to this whole issue of redistribution. In that process, if you want to reduce the amount of MPPs, I'd say fine again. But let's do it with a bit of common sense. Don't take communities like Iroquois Falls out of the ridings that are connected to Timmins. It doesn't make any sense. Don't take Matheson out. There's less of a connection with Matheson and Iroquois Falls to Kirk-

land Lake. It doesn't make any common sense at all. People come this way, people come to Timmins. So I say to the government members, you're wrong.

The other thing is that I've got to clarify for the record a couple of comments the member for Scarborough East made in his comments here on this bill. He had the audacity to stand in this House and say that, as he travelled through northeastern Ontario, northwestern Ontario, not one person came before the committee from an urban centre of northeastern or northwestern Ontario and spoke against the government's bill.

Madam Speaker, I can't say anything unparliamentary on that subject in regard to his comments, but let me tell you, he is sadly mistaken. There are people who came in droves across the north from urban centres, because that's the only place the committee went, and when people came to Timmins, the people who spoke in Timmins at the hearings by a majority, 90% of them, said: "Are you nuts? What are you doing? We don't want you to reduce the amount of seats in northern Ontario by five."

People like Mayor Vic Power, the mayor of the city of Timmins, who represents a fairly large urban centre, I would say —

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** And Timmins is an urban centre.

**Mr Bisson:** Yes, Timmins is an urban centre. He was opposed. He said, "Don't do this." In fact he went out and fought against the Liberals federally, his own party, to get them to stop doing what they were doing.

**Mr Len Wood:** Gilchrist thinks he's still working in a Canadian Tire store.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm going to come to that in a second. The other one was Mr Doody, the chair of the Northeastern Ontario Municipal Association, again a representative alderman, a former mayor of the city of Timmins, another urban centre in northern Ontario, who came before you and said, "Don't do this, it's nuts." People from across the community, people from the Social Action Coalition Timmins, Mr Ray Séguin, Mrs Joyce Warren, others who came before this committee and who presented said: "Don't do this. It doesn't make any sense."

When the member for Scarborough East comes into this House and says people in the north thought this was a good thing, he is not representing what he heard at those committees. I think the guy has still got his head stuck in a Canadian Tire store on a price ticket or something, because that's not what people in northeastern Ontario and northwestern Ontario had to say.

The other thing I would say about the member for Scarborough East is that he was, I thought, very combative with presenters who came before the committee, and I think the government members should have a chat with him. I got complaints about how he badgered the witnesses who came before the committee wanting to present in a way that was really unbecoming to a government member. People really felt intimidated by him in regard to how he treated them in his questioning on their presentations, and I think he was wrong.

**1850**

Mayors from across northeastern Ontario came to the city of Timmins — the mayor's representative from the town of Hearst, the mayor of Smooth Rock Falls, the



mayor of Chapleau, the mayor of the city of Timmins, and I think there was a representative from the community of Cochrane as well — came before the committee and said: "Don't do this. We don't want you to do it. It doesn't make any sense." The chamber of commerce in the town of Hearst, the chambers of commerce of other northeastern Ontario municipalities said no.

The chamber of commerce of the city of Timmins said yes. I'll at least try to represent their view. But they said there are some problems in the way you're doing it. They said, "We agree with the direction the government is taking, but the ridings will be big and that will represent a problem." They also pointed out that the synergies between communities like Iroquois Falls and Matheson will be lost with redistribution, and they thought it was not a very well-thought-out move to take Iroquois Falls and Matheson out of the riding of Cochrane South.

So I say to the members opposite, when the member for Scarborough East stands in this House and says all those people, the chambers of commerce from across northern Ontario and all the urban municipalities, were supportive, he's wrong.

The other thing he said, and I want to clarify the record, was that the member for Cochrane North was in favour of this legislation. Let me assure you neither the member for Cochrane North nor the member for Cochrane South is going to vote for this legislation, because we both disagree with the intent. We disagree with the loss of representation on the part of the north that this bill will represent to the people of northern Ontario.

We disagree because the ridings will be large and the ridings will be very difficult to service. The riding of Timmins-James Bay will stretch from the city of Timmins, north from Smooth Rock Falls, all the way up past Attawapiskat. That is a large, large area, some 800 miles in length, and we say that it's fairly difficult to service in the way the government expects us to do it with only one member.

We will be voting against this on the basis that we believe government must and should play a positive role in our communities, and by reducing the amount of MPPs, you are doing nothing but taking the power in Ontario away from elected representatives who represent the people of their constituencies and putting it in the hands of the few in the cabinet of Ontario, and worse still, you're going to be putting the power in the hands of nameless, faceless bureaucrats, who will have the power to do things with no public accountability.

The member for Cochrane North and the member for Cochrane South are going to vote against it because we believe this flies in the face of democracy. Democracy is a system that is based on the tenet that we elect representatives to come to the Legislature of Ontario to speak on behalf of the constituents. Reducing the amount of MPPs in Ontario will do nothing to advance the voice of the people, and we say that the government should go back. It should, first of all, withdraw this legislation, and it should come back and introduce a bill that deals with real parliamentary reform, because what's at issue here is that the people of Ontario, and generally in Canada, feel very disfranchised from government and feel very ill about politicians generally.

What we need to do is turn our attention to trying to make our system of Parliament work better. How do we do that? We change the legislative process so that bills are not introduced in the way they are now but are dealt with within a committee structure, so that people across the province and people from all parties are able to have meaningful dialogue and discussion and debate about how to make the bill better so that we can present bills in this House that have the broad support of all parties, not just the government party.

We also say we are going to vote against this on the basis of what it means to northern Ontario, because what you are doing, you are going to be taking away from the voice of the people of Ontario to this Legislature by reducing the amount of MPPs by five. To do what? In order to give a few people in Ontario, some of the wealthiest people in this province, a tax break. I say that's wrong. That's not what government should be all about.

I say, Madam Speaker, in wrapping up, that I will be voting against this legislation, along with the members of the New Democratic caucus, on the basis of what I have outlined in this lead speech today, and I wish that the members of the government would use a bit of common sense on this legislation and would try to take a look at this from the perspective of what a democracy is all about and move away from an ideological perspective that government is bad and that removing politicians from the equation is going to make things better.

With that, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you very much for this opportunity to have debate. J'attends avec plaisir que dans les prochains jours on va avoir l'opportunité d'écouter plus de monde sur cette question et voir ce que le débat va donner à la fin de la journée faisant affaire avec ce projet de loi.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments? The member for Port Arthur.

**Mr Gravelle:** I want to compliment the member for Cochrane South on an excellent speech, particularly as he certainly is one of the best people in the House to try and explain to the members across the floor here just what are the realities in the north and what really is the reason why this is happening. If he will indulge me, I would like to refer back as well to the member for Scarborough East — and the member for Cochrane South made reference to this — talking about how there was no urban representation in terms of any of the hearings in northern Ontario.

If he wants to insult the north and in my case say that Dryden is not an urban riding, that just shows you how out of touch he is. If that's the case, certainly he obviously wasn't listening very carefully, because there were two groups from Thunder Bay: the Thunder Bay Coalition Against Poverty, which represents the interest groups of people who are economically disadvantaged — they were there in Dryden expressing their concerns about this in terms of the geography and the realities — and the Northwestern Ontario Women's Decade Council from Thunder Bay was in Dryden expressing that. Again it's certainly an insult that the member for Scarborough East did not recognize that.



Let me tell you another story about the member for Scarborough East which is fascinating. He made the point in his speech, and he certainly did it as well in Dryden, that this was something that was in the Common Sense Revolution and it was something they indeed promised to do. He was speaking to, almost berating, a representative from the Kenora Board of Education — I can't recall her name — and saying, "How would you feel if we made this promise and we broke it?" I must admit I was a bit concerned at the time and I thought, gee, a lot of pressure. She looked him dead in the eye and she said, "Well, you also promised not to cut anything in education," and absolutely sort of broke up the room — much like they promised not to make any cuts to health care, much like they promised not to bring in any user fees.

The member for Scarborough East looked extremely foolish on a number of occasions. He simply is out of touch with the reality. I also could tell you that many of the Conservative members who were there were very overwhelmed, very impressed by the vast expanses, and I think recognized the need to keep 15 ridings.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'd like to apologize to the member from the government side. I didn't see him before, so I'm going to move back now.

**Mr Murdoch:** I understood you couldn't see me because there were too many people in the road. That was all right.

I just would like to say a few things about this bill, and first congratulate the member for going for an hour and a half on this bill. That's almost a record on this bill because I don't think it's one of the most important bills we're going to do in this House, but it's a bill that's going to —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** If you knew anything about northern Ontario, you'd understand.

**Mr Murdoch:** I do understand about northern Ontario. I do go up to northern Ontario quite a bit, I'd like to inform the members on the other side, and I do understand their concerns because I also have some concerns with the bill, believe it or not. So there you are. I think the unfortunate part is that the boundaries were drawn by the federal people and I don't think they understand how we work in Ontario. That's really unfortunate because they talk about how we have to have representation by population, but that doesn't work all over Canada even. If you look at Prince Edward Island, we have four seats there. I don't know what their population is but it's certainly —

**Mr Wildman:** About the size of Sudbury.

**Mr Murdoch:** Yes, about the size of Sudbury. So they've already got away from that. Now we're stuck on this thing that we have to have representation by population, but I think we should be looking at the area we have to travel, and that's where we do get to the north. So I do understand the problems up there and I also understand the problems where we don't look at municipalities.

We can take my riding. I think it's a very good riding now. It's all of Grey county and the city of Owen Sound. I even had a private member's bill. We changed the name of my riding from Grey to Grey-Owen Sound to recognize the city.

**Mr Wildman:** I supported it.

**Mr Murdoch:** Yes, that's right. All the members supported it because it made some sense. Now we're at a point that we're going to change the ridings and change a lot of things around. I think the problem is that we're going with the federal ridings and it would have been nicer to have some more input with the federal people to be able to change this.

So I do have some problems with this bill. I agree with the theory behind it that we can do as much work as the MPs can do. I believe our MPPs are every bit as good as the MPs, so we can do that. So the theory is right, but there have been some problems with it.

**Mr Len Wood:** I'd just like to congratulate my colleague from Cochrane South. He did an excellent job of laying out the concerns that everybody on northern Ontario has concerning this bill. The simple name they put on it, the Fewer Politicians Act, reminds me of when I was a kid, five or six years ago.

1900

**Mr Wildman:** You were a kid five or six years ago?

**Mr Len Wood:** Five or six years old, excuse me. You get a few tools and you take your bicycle apart. You tear it all apart like Mike Harris has torn Ontario apart and then you can't put it back together. So you've got to go and see your father or your older brothers and try to put it back together. We see quite clearly here what is happening in Ontario. This is just one piece of legislation that is involved in that. It's health care, it's education, it's an attack on women and children, it's an attack on everybody right around the province in order to save a few dollars so they can give a tax break to the 10% of the wealthiest upper people in the province.

I was pleased to follow the member for Grey-Owen Sound. As far as I can see, he's the only member of the Conservative caucus who is going to stand up and be proud to vote against this legislation, which is flawed. It's based on the federal redistribution. We said in northern Ontario that the federal redistribution of the boundaries was flawed. They based their redistribution on what the feds did in Ontario, and it's flawed as well.

We had the member from Scarborough earlier saying there weren't that many amendments brought in. We took the position during the committee and the clause-by-clause that when the legislation is that badly flawed, there's no consultation and it's a matter of the Conservative caucus ramming its views and ideas down the throats of everybody, no number of amendments brought forward could change legislation that is that badly flawed. I'm hoping that some of the Conservative backbenchers will support us in getting rid of this legislation.

**Mr Crozier:** I want to compliment the member for Cochrane South on an outstanding leadoff for the third party.

Also, with reference to the comments from the member for Grey-Owen Sound, yes, the feds did draw these boundaries. We from the southwest argued with the feds at the time because, for example, the town of Leamington and the township of Mersea will become part of the Kent riding. There's absolutely no community of interest there. It all goes west to Windsor, so that doesn't make sense. As Sean Conway pointed out in his leadoff, the boundaries as they are now were drawn for the Dominion of



Canada. He referred to the Dominion of Ontario, and it's certainly different, because in Canada the smaller areas like PEI have a minimum of four members, whether their population would warrant that or not.

As well, the member for Cochrane South referred to proportional government, and I want to say you were correct in your percentages; I have sent out and gotten them. But they're interesting in this way: In the election in 1995, the government received 44.8% of the vote but got 63% of the members. The NDP got 20% of the vote but got only 13% of the members. The Liberals got 31% of the vote but got only 23% of the members. Back in 1985, the Liberal and Conservatives were virtually the same at 37% of the popular vote, but the Conservatives got 52 seats and the Liberals 48. So proportional representation makes a lot of what the government likes to refer to as common sense. So why not consider that?

**Mr Bisson:** I want to thank the members for Port Arthur, Cochrane North, Grey-Owen Sound and Essex South for having commented on my speech. I say to the member for Grey-Owen Sound, as I understand that you have difficulty with this bill, that I hope, as the member for Cochrane North pointed out, you will be voting with us in opposition to this bill or at the very least trying to convince the members of your caucus to change their ways, because it will mean it will be a lot more difficult to be able to service those ridings once those ridings become larger.

The other thing is, in regard to the comments from the member for Essex-Kent, the real issue here, and that's what I tried to allude to in my speech, is that the government is not doing what it says it's going to do in this bill. They say they want to move and change government and make government work better. You're not going to make it better by eliminating politicians. The real issue is that you have to go through parliamentary reform. You need to change the way legislative committees work, as one idea. Another thing you can do is that you need to move on a system of proportional representation so that the elections truly represent in this Legislature how many members will sit here, so that if a party is elected with 40% of the vote, it should end up with 40% of the seats. It shouldn't be the way it is particularly at this point.

The last point I would make, on the comments from the member for Cochrane North, is that he understands, as I do, that there's a real big problem in northern Ontario, and the problem is getting worse, in regard to how the north is being treated by this provincial government. Funding to highways and highway maintenance has been cut; schools have been cut as far as funding is concerned; hospitals and municipalities. It has a greater and very direct effect on the people of northern Ontario than this government realizes. As long as they keep on going in this direction they will not get the support of the members from northern Ontario, because we understand, unlike what the government is saying, that government should have, and has, a responsibility for playing an important role in northern Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** It is my pleasure to rise in the House today to join my colleagues in the debate on Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act. As a

member of the standing committee on general government, I travelled to parts of northern Ontario to hear public presentations on this bill. We heard concerns that the changes to the boundaries are unfair and that they will result in unfair representation to those in rural areas and the north, and also heard concerns on the riding names. It was brought to my attention by the member for Simcoe East that he preferred to stay with the name of Simcoe East, but his riding is going to be changed to Simcoe North. My riding, Simcoe Centre, is going to be changed to Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford.

I have listened carefully to the concerns raised by Ontario residents and I have listened to the arguments of the opposition, and today I rise to show my support for this proposed Bill 81. I show my support for Bill 81 for a number of reasons: It is in the tradition of good government; it is fair to Ontarians because it will provide better representation; it will allow for better coordination between provincial members and their federal counterparts in representing their constituents; it will be easier for MPPs to have the concerns of their riding heard at Queen's Park; and it will pass cost savings on to the taxpayer.

Let me first speak to the issue of tradition. In recent weeks and during the second reading debate of this legislation we heard many arguments from the opposition that reducing the number of MPPs is contrary to the parliamentary traditions of this province. These comments likely relate to the fact that changes introduced in the 1970s saw the number of seats for members of the provincial Legislature grow to be 42% higher than the corresponding number of federal seats. They may also relate to the fact that since 1894 there have been more provincial than federal seats in the province. I do not believe that the status quo needs to be maintained just for the sake of tradition. I'm sure many people agree that change often brings improvement.

We have reached the point where people in Ontario have realized that bigger is not always better and that it is possible to do better for less. Ontario has had for decades governments which have seemed to lose sight of these concepts. Years of Liberal and NDP governments appeared to think it was better to raise taxes and take a bigger chunk of Ontario's workers' paycheques than to grapple with the task of finding ways to provide better service at less cost. These same governments embraced the notion that it was all right to spend billions of dollars more than the government was taking in in revenue rather than accept the challenge of balancing the books. So I suppose that with this sort of tradition in Ontario, it is understandable that these same people oppose legislation that would reduce the number of members in this assembly. This government is committed to upholding tradition, but we are not committed to maintaining the status quo to a point where we can no longer move forward.

Since our election we have celebrated Canada's heritage and crown by restoring the oath to the Queen for our police; we have pledged to make government smaller and more responsible, the way history tells us government is supposed to operate; and we have introduced legislation that will return the number of seats in this assembly to correspond to Ontario's number of seats in the federal parliament.



1910

It is worth remembering that Ontario has not always had so many MPPs. For the first 21 years following Confederation, the number of Ontario MPPs corresponded to the number of federal MPs. In 1933, then Tory Premier George Henry introduced legislation that cut the number of seats from 112 to 90. The leader of the Liberal Party at that time, Mr Harry Nixon, called for those seats to be reduced even further.

We have heard the argument that these new boundaries are unfair to residents in northern and rural communities; that it will become too difficult for MPPs to adequately represent the needs of their constituents; that travel throughout these large northern ridings is too difficult. It would appear that in 1933 the members of the assembly felt they could adapt to these demands, and so have the current federal MPs. They've accepted the changes.

**Mr Wildman:** How many months did the House sit in 1933? About three months a year.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** The member for Algoma.

**Mr Bisson:** Hello, this is 1996.

**Mr Tascona:** Surely, with today's advanced technology and prioritization of activities, today's MPPs can also adapt.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South.

**Mr Tascona:** I also support Bill 81 because it is in the tradition of fairness. We know that it is people who are at the heart of democracy, not geography. A look at the map of the new boundaries will tell you that these new ridings in the north are larger, but Bill 81 is fair because it looks at the population of all ridings. The north loses five seats, while the rest of the province will lose 22 seats.

Bill 81 will also treat future population growth fairly, as any changes to federal ridings later on would also be reflected in the provincial boundaries. The decision to move to 103 seats from the current 130 was made after extensive consultations by the federal government. In all, a non-partisan commission held 17 public hearings in 10 cities. If Ontario repeated the process —

**Mr Wildman:** They went from 99 to 103. They increased their representation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The member for Algoma, you had your chance, it's his turn.

**Mr Wildman:** I'm sorry, Mr Speaker. He provoked me.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I know that you will accept that. Please go ahead.

**Mr Tascona:** As I was saying, if Ontario repeated this process, it would cost taxpayers an additional \$2 million. The people of Ontario told our counterparts in Ottawa that 103 is an acceptable number of seats. We should respect this opinion.

During the election campaign in 1995, this government promised to reduce the number of MPPs. It should be in the tradition of this House to listen to what the people have to say, and this government is maintaining our commitment to honouring our election promises.

It is anticipated, by reducing the number of MPPs, we will save the taxpayers \$11 million a year. This govern-

ment promised to get Ontario's budget balanced by the year 2000-2001, and this initiative is one part of that commitment.

A smaller number of MPPs will also make it easier to have constituents' concerns heard at Queen's Park. Fewer politicians lead to greater efficiency in government, better representation and fewer people working harder to get more for their ridings.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Tascona:** In recent years, corporations have asked their employees to do more with less. The Ontario economy has dictated that families and working people will do more with less.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There's a point of order. Could you please take your seat. I would ask the members for Cochrane North and Cochrane South just to behave accordingly, please. Just remain quiet.

**Mrs Marland:** I sat in this place for 90 minutes, and no one interrupted the member for Cochrane South, so I appreciate your warning him.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Do you understand that I am trying to correct that? I know that the members for Cochrane North and Cochrane South will abide by the rules. Thank you. Take your seat.

**Mr Wildman:** On the same point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** No, that's settled. Take your seat. Thank you. Please go ahead.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Don't play with the rules.

**Mr Tascona:** I was with my friends in the north, and we had a very good time listening to the public. I would just have them bear with me so I can make my part in the debate heard.

I see no reason why Ontario's elected representatives can't rise to the same challenge that the private sector and the citizens of this province have had to face. By changing provincial riding boundaries to match federal boundaries, we will be creating a system that is simpler for the voter to understand. The boundaries, names and numbers of provincial ridings will match federal ridings, and I look forward to the cooperation with the federal member in my riding to do better for the citizens.

By making these ridings identical, we will also be making it easier for MPPs to do their jobs. As members of the provincial assembly, it is our job to act as the watchdog of government bureaucracy. It is up to us to support our local governments such as municipalities, school boards, health councils and hospital boards. It is also up to us to work with federal members of Parliament for the betterment of our own constituents. I am sure that as MPPs many of us have encountered the concerns of a resident, organization or municipality within our riding that required the attention of several levels of government and perhaps more than one provincial or federal MP. These proposed changes can only simplify the process which people use to obtain such assistance.

I urge all members of this House to lend their support to Bill 81, an act which will reduce the number of politicians in Ontario, maintain high standards of repre-



sentation and restore fairness and simplicity to the electoral system.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments? Now is the time. The member for Algoma.

**Mr Wildman:** I want to apologize, because the member really was provocative. He suggests that somehow geography doesn't count. In fact, what we're really talking about here is not only representation by population, which all of us accept as a principle, but we're also talking about, as the member for Mississauga South has said in the past, effective representation.

If it takes an MPP in an urban riding 15 minutes or half an hour to drive to attend a meeting with constituents and it takes a member in rural Ontario or in northern Ontario four or five or six hours to drive to a similar meeting, then the question is, is it possible to have effective representative? To suggest that geography doesn't count is to ignore the differences between urban Ontario and rural and northern Ontario.

As a party, the Progressive Conservative Party historically in this province has had a long tradition of representing not only the urban part of the province but the rural part of the province. I really have sympathy for the member for Grey-Owen Sound, who seems to be a voice in the wilderness in his caucus. The fact is that there are a lot of residents of rural Ontario and of northern Ontario who expect that they should be able to have the same kind of effective representation as urban residents. To suggest that it doesn't matter if it takes a whole day to drive, two ways, to attend a meeting when it only takes an hour or so return in an urban riding is to ignore the question of effective representation as well as representation by population.

**Mrs Marland:** I know that in these two-minute Q and As we are really supposed to respond to the previous speaker in the debate, but there always seems to be quite a bit of latitude permitted. On that basis, first of all, I would like to congratulate the member for Simcoe Centre. I would like to say to the member for Algoma, as one of the long-time-serving members of this House, that my impression of how he has represented his constituents has always been that he has very commendably represented his constituents in the riding that he has, where still today, in comparison to my riding in terms of how long it takes to get from one end to the other, there is no comparison at all. I think this argument about the geographic size of ridings is relative, but it's already relative in terms of the challenges the members from those ridings —

**Mr Len Wood:** Then why are you changing them?

**Mrs Marland:** I'm not interrupting you, I say to the member for Cochrane North, and I would appreciate the opportunity to speak uninterrupted, or else you're only going to have to listen to me later on this evening.

1920

The members who say this legislation provides an impediment to them in their ability to represent their ridings are putting themselves down. I think they represent their ridings to the best of their ability, as do all members in this place, with commitment and with sincerity.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** The member, I know, didn't have enough time to talk about the tax cut

and how that's affecting this particular piece of legislation. You see, all the government's legislation is motivated by the fact that it has this bizarre tax scheme which is going to provide a 30% tax cut for the richest people in our society. I think, for instance, of bank presidents and corporation presidents who make hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars, who will be able to benefit most from this tax cut. What's happening now is that the government has to scramble and bring in legislation which in other circumstances it might not bring in, because it has to feed the tax cut.

A lot of people in this province now understand that the government has to borrow \$5 billion additional per year to give me and others in the province a tax cut. I noticed today, I guess it was on City TV, they had a very scientific call-in poll which said, for instance on Wheel-Trans, that people would be prepared to give up their tax cut so that you could have Wheel-Trans continue. It was about three quarters of the people.

All the government policy, including this bill, is affected by the fact that the government has this tax cut, and it's losing the revenue, so it's doing a couple of things: First, it's borrowing more money, paying interest on that money and adding to the provincial debt; second, the government is making very deep cuts it never contemplated it would have to make; and third, the government is placing video lottery terminals or electronic slot machines in every bar, restaurant and neighbourhood in the province.

**Mr Bisson:** To the member for Simcoe Centre, you made comments in your speech that it's going to be easier for people in northern Ontario to know who their MPs and MPPs are. Do you think we're stupid? Do you think that people in northern Ontario don't know who their MPs and MPPs are? We are members of smaller communities. I venture to guess that voter recognition of both provincial and federal members in northern Ontario is far superior to what you'll find in the Toronto ridings. That's not an issue in northern Ontario. For the member to make that argument I think is really not understanding what northern Ontario is all about.

The other point the member from Simcoe Centre makes is that in having larger ridings, members will have to become more efficient, and if we were more efficient we'd be able to do our jobs better. I don't know how I'd change the geography in the riding of Timmins-James Bay. The point is that as efficient as I try to get, it is still three hours by road from Timmins to Hearst, given good weather and daylight conditions. As efficiently as I try to drive, as good as I am at trying to be more efficient, I can't get there any faster than three hours. Is the member suggesting that I should speed? Is the member suggesting I should buy a car that does 150 miles an hour so I can get to the meeting in half the time, in an hour and a half? Is the member suggesting I should put my life and that of other people on the highways, on Highway 11, in jeopardy? No. There are only so many things you can do. That's a fact of geography. The reality is that you have vast distances that you have to travel, and as efficient as I try to get, I can't drive any faster than the speed limit or thereabouts. I say to the member that efficiency doesn't cut it.



Lastly I would say, as the member for St Catharines is saying, why don't you come clean? What this legislation is all about is to find dollars to pay for the tax cut that Mike Harris wants to give to people, and on that I say he's wrong.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Simcoe Centre. You have two minutes to reply.

**Mr Tascona:** I'll try to keep my reply relevant to the debate. We're dealing with Bill 81.

The issue that was raised by the member from Algoma and the member from Cochrane South is: Is it possible to have proper representation? I think that it is possible. I come from one of the largest ridings in the province, Simcoe Centre, which is not only urban but also rural, and it takes me over an hour to get from one point of the riding to the other point.

**Mr Wildman:** Yours is smaller than ours.

**Mr Tascona:** Certainly it is smaller than yours, Mr Wildman, but the fact of the matter is that geography and population were taken into account. Certainly you're going to have to prioritize your time. The federal MPs that currently stand didn't complain about this. They think they represent their members the best they can. We didn't hear from any federal problems.

But I will say that I heard from the public in the hearings that if the members don't believe they can properly represent their constituents, maybe they should move over and let someone else do that, and they've basically said that's what they would do.

In terms of the perception that the member for Cochrane South says the public has of politicians, I think what the public wants from politicians is to know where they stand and keep their promises, and that's something this government is doing. During the election we told the public we would reduce the number of politicians, and they voted and supported that. The members across the way would like us to change our minds and not keep our promises.

In closing I'd like to say this: I was in those hearings in the north, and the number of politicians outnumbered the number of the public. What does that say? I think they accepted the changes and I think that members should accept the changes the government is going to make right now. Thank you.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** I'll tell them that when I go back home this weekend.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I hope that the members from Lake Nipigon, Cochrane North and Cochrane South are not asking me to ask you to leave before midnight. I hope you're not asking me that.

Further debate? The member for Oriole.

**Mr Bradley:** She was on CBC earlier tonight. I saw her. She did a very good job. Mr Clement was on as well.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** I thank my colleague, Mr Bradley from St Catharines, for his very kind words.

As we rise today to debate Bill 81, which is entitled the Fewer Politicians Act, I am speaking with a great deal of sadness. I'm sad from a number of perspectives, Mr Speaker, that I think you will understand.

My first sadness is the title of this bill. I entered public life because I believe in public service. I believe in democracy and in the role of elected representatives, politicians, to serve their communities, to listen to them, to bring their message to the legislatures of this land. I feel that the title of this legislation diminishes us all and feeds the cynicism within society which threatens our democracy. I say to the government that you do no good when you send out the message that politicians are not of value and not to be valued by the people they serve.

I hope that the members in the Conservative caucus who hear this, and the people watching this debate, will think very carefully about what society is like without elected representatives to hear them, speak on their behalf and vote in a free and open democratic society. Any piece of legislation that diminishes those who choose to stand and do that difficult job, when they are diminished our freedom and our democracy are diminished. As cynicism is fuelled and increased in our society, those of us who value and cherish the democratic right to elect our politicians have every reason to feel the sadness I feel when I read the title of this bill. That is my first reason to be sad.

1930

My second reason is that the riding of Oriole disappears, the name "Oriole" disappears. I have chosen tonight to read into the record the words of my predecessor, proud member of the Conservative caucus, Solicitor General for the province, who was the first member for Oriole and spoke eloquently about the proud tradition of the name "Oriole." I say to the members of the Conservative caucus how sad and disappointed I am that they refuse to accept an amendment that would have allowed the new riding of Don Valley East to carry the name of "Oriole." Since the entire Oriole community of the Henry Farm exists within the new riding boundaries of Don Valley East, it would be most appropriate for that name to be continued, because it is a proud name in the history of Ontario. Let me read into the record what Mr John Williams, the first member for Oriole, had to say about the name Oriole:

"One of the four new ridings established within the Metropolitan Toronto area was the riding of Oriole of which I am proud to be the representative" — I share that pride — "Geographically, the riding was carved entirely out of the original and much larger York Mills riding. Its geographic heart is found at the intersection of the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway and the Don Valley Parkway, within the borough of North York.

"Historically, Oriole was the name of the small, rural mill community which was located at Leslie St and Sheppard Ave. In fact, the community was named after Oriole Lodge, the farmhouse of George S. Henry, the Premier of Ontario from 1930 to 1934. It was called Oriole Lodge because of the numerous Baltimore oriole birds that used to migrate to the area each spring in the early part of this century. The Henry home still stands in all its majestic splendour in the modern Henry Farm subdivision located a block away from this member's home." I'm speaking now of Mr Williams, the member at that time.



"While still a part of the original York Mills riding, the area was capably and admirably represented by the Hon Dalton Bales."

I skip a paragraph because, while my intention here today is not in any way to diminish the representation of Mr Bales, I want to refer to the history of Oriole riding:

"Oriole, the sleepy rural village, has now become the bustling cosmopolitan urban riding of Oriole. The demographics of the riding disclose a population in excess of 75,000 people, the majority of who are Anglo-Saxon, yet infused with a significant number and variety of ethnic groups and cultures."

I'm going to stop at this point because the point has been made. In fact, Oriole has changed. It is no longer the rural small village. However, the intersection of Sheppard and Don Mills, the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway and the 401, the Henry Farm estates and the old Oriole Lodge are still a reality. The only place the name "Oriole" exists today is on the GO station at that intersection of Leslie and Sheppard, where it says "Oriole." The home of the naturalists foundation is not too far away, and there are just a few birds, but I can tell you that Oriole is a proud name. The community chose the name of the Oriole community resource centre as a way of preserving and protecting the proud heritage. I say with some sadness that the Conservative government has chosen to turn its back on a little bit of history in Ontario when they refuse to allow the name "Oriole" to remain and continue on as the name of the riding.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** I was going to vote in favour of this bill until I heard this.

**Mrs Caplan:** The member for Windsor-Riverside makes jest, and he's jesting by saying he was going to support this bill until I made this pitch on behalf of the name "Oriole," and it's not a joke. To the historians of this province, to the people who care about our history, to Mr Williams, a proud Conservative member, to the historical board of the city of North York —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Address the Chair, please. Please address the Chair. Thank you.

**Mrs Caplan:** — the name is an important name. As I rise today to speak to the redistribution bill, Bill 81, it is with some sadness that there will no longer be a member for Oriole because the name "Oriole" will disappear, and that in fact is something to be sad about.

The other thing I am concerned about is some of the content of this bill, because this bill suggests that the federal boundaries are appropriate for the province of Ontario. By this logic, if it is appropriate for Ontario, why would it not be appropriate for all of Canada? I would like to put on the record what would happen if each of the provinces adopted the federal boundaries for their provincial legislatures. It speaks volumes as to the difficulties that I have with this legislation.

The province of British Columbia today has 75 provincial ridings; it has 34 federal ridings. The entire British Columbia Legislature would be 34 members if Bill 81 were imposed on the province of British Columbia. I see the member opposite saying: "No problem with that. That's just fine."

Alberta has 83 provincial seats in its provincial Legislature today; it would have 26, because that is the

number of federal seats for the entire province of Alberta. The member opposite says, "That's no problem."

The province of Saskatchewan has 58 members of its provincial Legislature; 14 members of the federal Parliament come from Saskatchewan. Imagine a provincial Legislature with 14 members.

Manitoba is the same. They have 57 provincial ridings; they have 14 federal ridings. Councils of 14 are the norm for our municipalities. Would that work? Maybe it would.

Quebec has 125 provincial members of its Legislature. There are 75 federal seats.

Nova Scotia has 52 members of its provincial Legislature. There are 11 federal seats. Imagine the province of Nova Scotia with a provincial Legislature of 11 members.

New Brunswick, with 55 members of its provincial Legislature, would have 10 if Bill 81 were imposed on it; 10 members of the provincial Legislature if it adopted the federal boundaries.

Prince Edward Island, which is guaranteed by our Constitution a minimum of four, today has a provincial Legislature of 32. Impose Bill 81, they would have four members.

Newfoundland presently has a provincial Legislature of 48. If Bill 81 were imposed on Newfoundland, its entire provincial Legislature would have seven members.

The Yukon would have but one person, one member, and the Northwest Territories two, in its provincial Legislative Assembly.

The reason I'm pointing this out is that while 103 seats and moving to the federal boundaries may sound like a reasonable thing to do, when you consider the implications in every province across this country, you have to wonder what the implications will be in Ontario for representation and whether or not the size of this province, given the geographic differences, the fact that we will have significant reduction in our northern and rural communities — and in fact Metropolitan Toronto itself will have diminished representation with Bill 81.

1940

There are those who may not care, those who feel that the politicians do not do anything important, those who feel that it would be just fine to have a provincial Legislature of 10 in New Brunswick. But I say to you, democracy is important, community representation and participation is important, and it's important to think about what the impact of Bill 81 is in Ontario, given what the impact would be on the provinces if it were imposed.

I am concerned because Ontario is very large. It is the size of Spain and France put together. It is a huge geographic area. It is relatively sparse in population, with a population of some 11 million people. In this country of 26 million people, Ontario has 11 million of those 26 million to 30 million people. Our north is especially important to our vibrant economy, and the voice of the north has always been accommodated in the provincial Legislature by a reasonable deviation from the rule of representation by population.

I want to go on record as saying loudly and clearly that I support representation by population. Just as the Constitution of this country guarantees minimum representation for the province of Prince Edward Island, so too



do I believe that we should have guarantees of minimum representation for important economic regions of this province. I feel that we cannot silence the voice or disenfranchise those areas of the province that are already hampered by distance, by geography and frequently by many of the disadvantages of small population and large distances between their small communities.

I would have preferred a process that led to redistribution such as the ones that have been traditional in this province. Never before has any provincial government in my lifetime or history ever by fiat imposed a specific number or determination on political boundaries and representation. Always there has been a procedure of a commission, where communities could make their representation and have their voice heard, the discussion of what is a reasonable deviation and variation from the average to ensure representation by population. Always was there the opportunity for us to have that thoughtful debate here in the Legislature.

I have excerpts from what the members of the official opposition had to say during those debates, and I have excerpts from what the government members, from what Mr Harris himself, had to say. I think you would be surprised to know that the members of the government who today are supporting and bringing forward Bill 81 raised their voices in concern for rural and northern and small towns and the need to have representation from across this province in a way that would give effect and force to democratic principles and effective representation for those communities.

I'm not going to read all of those debates into the record, but I will suggest to you that in a climate where, frankly, politicians are not too popular, Mr Harris and his Conservative Party during the last election fanned the flames and fuelled the cynicism of the public with a crass political promise to get rid of politicians, and hence this bill called the Fewer Politicians Act.

I believe that in fact we do need to have legislative reform. We have to take a look at changes in our population and changes in distribution. We should have a debate and discussion about what is the appropriate size of our Legislature. But there are some things that are missing from this bill. If the government was really intent on streamlining, it could have included in this bill a proposal, for example, to have one voters list. I mentioned this yesterday. There is no reason why, if we are moving to the federal boundaries, we could not have one voters list. Even if we weren't going to the federal boundaries, but certainly, since we are, there is no need for a separate provincial enumeration. I have spoken with the chief returning officer.

That would save the province \$16 million, and I can only ask why that is not included in Bill 81. I believe that is because this is a political document as opposed to a governance and a representative document dealing with our democracy and our Legislature. No thought has gone into the implications and the ramifications of this bill, except for that crass promise to have fewer politicians.

If this government were really interested in electoral boundary change, they would have established a process that would have given communities an opportunity to have their say before the government made their decision,

but like so many things that this government has done, its style of doing things is, "We will tell you what we're going to do, we'll let you have your say, and then we're going to do exactly what we wanted to do whether you like it or not."

When you come forward with proposals or changes or amendments, the government refuses to listen. Every single one of the Liberal amendments that was placed at committee to improve this bill was defeated. The amendment to maintain the name "Oriole" was defeated and every other amendment that was proposed to improve the bill was defeated.

That is a government that is not listening and this bill reflects a government that does not value the participation and the representation of people from across this province. They reflect a paternalistic view of the few who believe that they know what is best for you. That is the tradition of conservatism that is typical of the actions and the behaviour of Premier Harris, of his cabinet and of the party in power in Ontario today. They diminish democracy.

They believe that politicians have not the value and the respect of the community and they feed that with Bill 81, instead of showing the kind of leadership I believe they have a responsibility to show, to stand in their places and to say in these difficult and cynical times that there is something to value and to respect in the political representation in this province, whether that representation is on the government side of the House or on the opposition side. That is the essence of our democracy.

Bill 81 is a same reflection of the attitude we saw in Bill 26, that attitude of the accumulation of powers by the government, "We don't have to listen to you, we know best," and I say to the government and I say to the people who are watching this debate, I hope that mood passes quickly or I fear that people will lose hope that they can make a difference in public life. I have not lost hope. I believe public life is about public service. I believe in the value of our democracy. I believe our politicians work hard and deserve respect. I believe it is important that they listen to their constituents and speak on their behalf without fear.

**1950**

As I take my seat, I am sad. I am sad that the riding of Oriole, the name "Oriole," will disappear from the legislative history of this province.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to participate in this debate today. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of my constituents in the riding of Oriole and my friends across the province a happy, healthy and prosperous holiday season, a happy, healthy and prosperous 1997, and I hope for a spirit of enthusiasm and optimism because I fear that this kind of legislation that is before us today dampens our enthusiasm for participation in the democratic process.

I conclude my debate on Bill 81.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Cooke:** I'd like to thank the member for her comments and just make a couple of comments of my own that she might comment on. I don't disagree with her initial comment that the basic thrust of this piece of legislation is one to put down politicians, which in effect



downplays the importance of democracy and the role that people play who get involved in it. I think that is very sad. It's populist politics at its worst, and that's why I have difficulties with this legislation.

In principle, I don't have a big problem with going down to 99 seats and trying to simplify the whole process of having coterminous riding boundaries with the federal boundaries. What I have a problem with is the simplistic approach that this government has taken to it. If you were really going to look at decreasing the number of seats, there are other questions that need to be answered.

What about the budgets for MPPs, especially in northern Ontario where at the same time that you've decreased the number of MPPs you have decreased the budgets for MPPs and their ability to communicate with their constituents? If you want to parallel what's going on at the federal level, then I think there should be an examination of paralleling the ability financially in MPPs' budgets to communicate with their constituents. They're allowed to communicate two or three times a year. We should have been able to maintain that so we can have proper dialogue and people can be kept informed.

The standing orders of the Legislature: I am very concerned that our standing orders in no way, shape or form, when it comes to official party recognition, when it comes to other numbers that actually kick in, numbers in the Legislature do not reflect on a proportional basis the standing rules at the federal level.

Again it's simplistic, and that's what makes it wrong. If you want to do it right, look at the whole picture.

**Mr Baird:** I listened with great interest to the speech of my colleague the member for Oriole. She spoke of this campaign commitment being a crass promise as if it were dreamed up on the back of a campaign bus or during a faltering campaign, much like the plan that the Liberal Party had to cut taxes. When they took a big dive in the polls in the 1990 election, when they had the members in the third party hot on their heels, they all of a sudden decided they would be reborn tax cutters.

This charge of a crass promise is certainly not the case. It was one we made more than 12 months before the election was even called. It was a promise we made. We realized if we were to dig ourselves out of the hole of debt and excessive government spending and excessive government taxation, we had to lead by example, that the solution to the challenging public policy initiatives would start at the top. It started at the top with the cut in the size of the cabinet. We have fewer parliamentary assistant and we've reduced spending here at Queen's Park by more than 20%. So I don't think it was a crass promise.

With respect to reducing the numbers and then somehow setting up a different system of 103 ridings, I think it flies in the face of what we were told to do. The public told us that they didn't like duplication and overlap. Here's a way where we can use the same boundaries as our federal colleagues, free from gerrymandering, free from any political interference, which I think is very good news indeed. It will save more money for potentially the same returning officer, potentially the same voters list. We're currently in discussions on those issues, which are well worth it.

The final issue is the reputation of parliamentarians and politicians. Too often that reputation has suffered. Certainly it doesn't bear resemblance to my impressions of those I've worked with, but we've got a public relations problem. The public has seen parliamentarians and politicians as trying to prevent themselves from receiving any cuts, and we've got to lead by example to help regain the trust of the people.

**Mrs Marland:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We do have some courtesy sometimes in this chamber, and I think one of the courtesies that we normally regard is that when someone has two minutes —

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you for making my job easier. Order. It's not a point of order. Thank you very much.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I want to commend my colleague from Oriole for her speech and I want to just take that part of her speech that deals with parliamentary nomenclature. She makes a very good point. We will, with the passage of Bill 81, say farewell to the nomenclature of "Oriole." It seems to be almost an apostasy that later-day Conservatives would want to do such injustice to the memory of the former leader of the Conservative Party of Ontario and former Premier of Ontario, George S. Henry. It is interesting, as the member for Oriole observes, that there was a time, and not that long ago, when the Premier of Ontario had an address of rural route 3, Toronto, Oriole Farms, George S. Henry. The name of "Oriole" speaks to that part of our past.

When I look at this bill, it's going to give us the wonderfully antiseptic, androgynous names of Don Valley East, Brampton, Milton, whatever. We are saying goodbye to Oriole. We once had electoral districts in this place with the names of Bracondale and Monck and Cardwell, to name but three; they're all gone. And now we embrace these wonderfully antiseptic suburban names like Don Valley East that will be, of course, written for this sovereign provincial Legislature by the Dominion Parliament up in Bytown.

I say again that it is interesting that in all of this talk about efficiency, I've yet to hear one of the Reform-a-Tories across the way say they're prepared to have Mr Chrétien's returning officers run the next provincial election campaign.

**M. Pouliot :** Jamais n'aurais-je cru quand, ce jour du début de décembre, un mardi à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, à 20 h, some 10, almost 12 years ago, when I was favoured through the courtesy, the favour of the electorate of Lake Nipigon, the largest geographic riding in Ontario, and my predecessor and mentor, the former Speaker Mr Jack Stokes, who was elected to this assembly in 1967 by way of redistribution — never would he or I have thought that on December 3 at 8 o'clock we would begin to say farewell to representation, not to ourselves. Mr Stokes's future, politically speaking, is behind him. He served very well, a legend in the riding of Lake Nipigon. This is only my fourth term. It's unimportant here.

More important are the people in Lake Nipigon, in our vast and magnificent riding, asking you to represent them, and this is what's at stake here: asking you to convey to



the government their need, their requirements in terms of health care, by way of workers' compensation, by way of other essential services, information and, at times, assistance.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Your time has expired. The member for Oriole, two minutes.

2000

**Mrs Caplan:** I'm proud to rise as the member for Oriole in the final days of this debate on Bill 81. I say to the members who spoke during questions and comments that I recognize the importance of redistribution and I think the debate over the size of the Legislature is an important one.

I also hear from the Conservative members that this bill is about saving money. I say to them it is not about saving money. The amount of money you are going to save in this bill — when all is said and done, you will find you have not saved any money. This is not about saving money. They say it's going to save \$11 million, and I say to them it will not.

The single voters list, I have been told, will save \$16 million. Why aren't you doing that? Doing away with duplication of returning officers and duplication of enumeration is where the saving comes.

You are going to have to increase the supports for members. You're going to have the same expenses and then some, because members have to represent their ridings. You kid yourself and you kid the people of this province if you are suggesting that this bill is about saving money or that this bill is about deficit or debt. It is not.

This bill diminishes all of us who stand and serve in the Parliament of this province, who choose public life, who believe it is about public service. This bill is not entitled a redistribution bill, this bill is entitled a fewer politicians bill. Let's get the record straight: This bill will concentrate the power in the hands of the cabinet and in the elected few who run the province, and the riding of Oriole will be diminished because of it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Pouliot:** When we're talking about Bill 81, members opposite and our colleagues on the same side, members of the official opposition, will readily acquiesce, for it is a given: So little time and yet so much to say.

But I would be remiss if I did not, first and foremost, voice my appreciation, echo my sincere sentiments vis-à-vis the address from the member for Oriole, the previous speaker. We don't become less or more compatible, but in our context she is about to be told, "No thank you, we don't need you."

Tout ceci a commencé, all this began with the now celebrated, now well-analogued presentation of the member for Renfrew North, not the dean of the House, but very close as the deputy dean, if you would, the second-longest-sitting member in this House.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Mississauga South, the member for Lake Nipigon has the floor.

**Mr Pouliot:** I don't say the following by way of compliment, but merely by way of observation. Not only do they remove your riding, ask you to leave, but they consistently get involved in interruptions, and I would

appreciate demanding the same courtesy that I extend as a representative for Lake Nipigon not to interrupt others when they have the floor and when they are recognized by yourself, sir, with respect.

The member for Renfrew North traced the historic balance, went back to the days of Confederation, with dates and the appropriate database to explain what the situation has been, the consistency, the exceptions, and what the situation would be. Yet because Bill 81 is politically motivated, this has nothing to do with the force of reasoning. This is 90% politics and 10% very thin wrapping of what the Common Sense Revolution gives it. This is politically crass.

I recall so vividly, and you do too, during the last election campaign when the government today was courting, soliciting the favour of the electorate, asking Ontarians to vote for them to replace what had been a good government — ours — and another good government, that previous to ours. They had a truck, one of those flatbeds, outside the Legislature with 99 chairs on it. I don't know what it cost them to rent the truck, but people were there taking pictures and it appeared in the *Toronto Sun* and in other local papers. The expediency was quite apparent.

Then the number of chairs never appeared, because the election took place before it did. They go from 99 to 103, and their *raison d'être*, their argument, is, "If the feds can do it, we can do it too." They feel somewhat secure in asking the simple question to the taxpayers, the people who pay for all this: "Do you have just enough politicians, too many politicians, or not enough politicians?" So they're quite secure.

What about the history mentioned by our friend Mr Conway, our friend from Renfrew North? What about the guidance? Is it to say that under the proposed changes we would see the Yukon and the Northwest Territories end up with between half and three quarters of a member because they don't have the population, regardless of the immense territory they have to serve? Is it to say that the province of PEI would get fewer than two members?

The riding I represent starts in the first nation community of Mobert, a small community on Highway 17 just northwest of the community of White River. I live in the next community, that of Manitouwadge. It's an Ojibway legend. Translated, it simply means "cave of the great spirit." We're 54 kilometres off the junction of the Trans-Canada Highway. Our small population in our community, in our village, is some 3,300 to 3,400 residents. Our community was founded by virtue of our natural resources, the discovery of what is the now defunct Geco mines, Noranda division. The nearest house, our neighbour, is 100 kilometres, 65 miles, from where we're located. So we're self-reliant, we're resourceful. We have to be. We're independent.

If you were to drive from Manitouwadge to go to the community of Pickle Lake in the riding of Lake Nipigon, one way — and I wish to have Mr Gravelle take note of this; I think he's already aware — you would leave Manitouwadge and you would drive to Pickle Lake, in the same riding, 600 miles — not kilometres, miles. Once you reach Pickle Lake, if you were to fly, because there are no roads there, to northwestern Ontario, to Fort



Severn, the northernmost community in the same riding — and you've been there, Mr Speaker, when you were representing the Ombudsman. I've followed your career. You can relate directly because you've done it: been there, done that — that's another 600 miles, one way.

We're closer here in Toronto, in this assembly, to Miami, Florida, and Halifax than we are to some parts of our riding. Twenty-six per cent of the overall land mass of the province is nestled in the Canadian Shield between the inner sea of Lake Superior, the largest of the Great Lakes, and the largest body of water right across beyond the Great Lakes, that of Lake Nipigon, overshadowed by Hudson Bay, the eighth-largest body of water in the world.

Yet we only have 33,000 residents; we're underpopulated. Eighteen per cent of our residents are native Canadians. We have well over 30 communities. The irony is that at the federal level the provincial riding of Lake Nipigon is split four ways federally — four federal representatives at the same time; one provincial representative. I've searched long and hard to see why they are doing it. They're removing our riding. Is it because it's not large enough? Sure, we don't have 100,000 residents, but we're the size of Germany.

**2010**

You know, if you were to look at the province of Prince Edward Island, add to it that of New Brunswick, add to it that of Nova Scotia, put them together and multiply by two, you would have the riding of Lake Nipigon, yet someone says, "You have too much representation." There are fully 80 countries in the world that are smaller than the riding of Lake Nipigon, and 45 out of the 50 states are smaller than our riding. You want to know what those countries are? Listen and listen quick.

Albania, smaller than Lake Nipigon; Armenia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Bahamas; Bahrain; Barbados; Bangladesh; let's not forget Belgium; Burundi; Bulgaria; Cambodia; Cape Verde; Costa Rica, smaller than Lake Nipigon; Cuba; Cyprus; Djibouti; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; Equatorial Guinea; Estonia; Gabon; Gambia; Ghana; Greece; Grenada; Guatemala; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Guyana; Haiti; Honduras; Hungary; Iceland; the Republic of Ireland; Israel; Italy; Jamaica; Jordan; Kuwait; Laos; Latvia; Lebanon; Lesotho; Liberia; Liechtenstein — maybe they can spell that; it's a tax haven. Liechtenstein is way smaller; Bahamas, Grand Cayman Island, they know those; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malawi; Malta; Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean; Nepal, don't forget; Netherlands; New Zealand; Nicaragua; the Kingdom of Oman, much smaller; Panama; the Philippines; Portugal; Qatar; Romania; Rwanda; St Christopher-Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent; San Marino; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Suriname; Swaziland; Switzerland; Syria; Taiwan; Tajikistan; Thailand; Togo — we're up to T; I won't be too long — Tonga; Tunisia; Tuvalu; Uganda; the United Kingdom; Uruguay; the Vatican; and Vanuatu.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Not the Vatican.

**Mr Pouliot:** Yes, the Vatican. There is no last refuge, no sacred trust.

It's been said by the Premier in a moment of pique — in a moment that he must and shall regret, but among any moments it takes on lesser proportions — to my friend for Cochrane North, and it was said directly, "Well, you're interested in filling your pockets." I can assure you that it was not the moment of noblesse oblige. It was cheap, completely uncalled for, undignified for the Premier of the largest jurisdiction in the Dominion. I was disappointed. At first I didn't believe it. I went to the comfort and privacy of my small apartment, the small cubicle I occupy, and I played it over and over again. I was appalled and shocked. I got on the phone and I said, "There is no way Premier Harris can say this, accuse politicians of filling their pockets."

This is thrown at my friend here, who spent over 20 years working in a paper mill, who is a person of consequence, although of moderate means. He was talking about representation. He was talking about a small airport in his special part of Ontario. He gets off a difficult flight, at this time of year, and someone says, "Len, what about my compensation?" Len says to his constituent, "It's your back, is it?" And he goes on with his staff, time after time.

This is what this bill will cease to do. That's what it's all about. It's about people who speak Cree or speak Ojicree, who get to know you — you earn your stripes — and tell you about the daily problems they experience, and they expect you to be able to articulate them to the best of your ability.

It's about the small entrepreneur, grub and stake, who says, "I'm going to take a chance in your special part of Ontario. I'm in forestry" or "junior gold mining, and I'm going to convince some friends to put their life savings into a venture."

They won't have the same say, because there will be too many problems and too many opportunities to address at the same time. I'm getting some; our office has taken calls. This is a small entrepreneur, a junior mining executive, who just called our office, saying, "Don't mention the name" — I've got it right here; it's available for the record — "but just mention, is our investment safe?" It's as simple as that. They were going to create 50 to 60 jobs. Does Bill 81 address that? No. A laughing matter for some, but certainly not if you need a paycheque.

**Mr Laughren:** Not on this side.

**Mr Pouliot:** Not at all, not at all.

A small company, another one, it says it's an abbreviation, and they hope to be listed. They want you to go to the Ontario Securities Commission; you can't do that, but there are mechanisms, without getting too involved. Lake Superior Registered Resources: another stock, another possibility for employment. I will hand these over to verify the authenticity to my colleague from Renfrew North, because he may wish to speak about the mining companies I have mentioned.

I have with me, and it tells the tale, the federal electoral district and what will happen now. If the camera could focus here, you would see the immensity of our riding. It's now becoming Thunder Bay-Nipigon. Kenora-Rainy River will be 330,000 square kilometres. Where will it stop?



They say they will save money, and it has been mentioned before that the bottom line is saving dollars. It's important, but you also have to blend the necessity to enact saving at every opportunity with the right to be represented. A few dollars more, a fistful, for their endeavour, their tax cut that will benefit the people who could more afford not to have the tax cut because they're wealthy, they're of consequence. Mr Speaker, what about ordinary people like you and I, or people who don't even make our — for some; everything is relative — big salary? It's not that big, but it's certainly sufficient. Politicians live very well, and that's been reconciled; they've taken away some of the post-service benefits that politicians were to enjoy because it was deemed to be too lucrative. I agree that we do have to tighten our belts. There's nothing wrong with that because we're asking of others that they do so also.

But reducing the number of seats from 130 to 103, when the province has increased its population by 700,000 in the last four years, when the federal government increases the number of representatives from 99 to 103, goes against the current. It does not make any sense. We will become the least represented of any jurisdiction in Canada, and it's not fair.

2020

The riding of Lake Nipigon, which is special indeed, one of the special northern ridings, has a special allocation of \$7,000 a year more to charter aircrafts because of the size, and two of those ridings are asked to disappear. I understand that you have in some southern ridings 80,000 people plus. We don't have that. But surely you cannot spend the same time driving from one meeting to the other.

Some people across are sending notes and making signs that you can use your cell phone to get in contact with people, that you can use teleconferencing. There is nothing like interfacing, like being there physically to meet with people. We don't have the sophistication of a private channel in every community. Many in our communities don't have sewer and water, and you're asking them to be on the Internet? You're asking people in Kasabonika and Port Severn to become part of the Web and the Internet, to use their cell phone? Well, snap out of it. Government, get real. It does not quite exist there. We have to get there. It gets to minus 40, minus 50.

**L'hon Noble Villeneuve (Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre responsable des affaires francophones) :** Chez nous aussi.

**Mr Pouliot:** Yes, yes. I've been to your place. I know where you live. I know when spring starts. So please, BS your friend, but don't go beyond that.

Mr Speaker, sometimes those southerners, those Torontonians, with the highest of respect — we don't pretend to know all the intricacies that take place in an urban centre, and we would ask that they not cast judgment on the people who supply them with wealth and resources: for them, the people from abroad; for us, the people from a special part of Ontario. While waving our hands and saying, «Je te fais signe d'attendre,» I'm asking you to reconsider Bill 81, not because of the numbers of politicians but because of representation,

because of the service that you deserve. There is little rhyme or reason. There is no substance. The argument for doing this is mostly crass. It's political expediency. The veil is thin.

My colleague Rosario Marchese said yesterday it was like a cheap striptease. Although I don't express myself in those tones, suffice that it doesn't belong in the cheapest tombola or vaudeville. It's not even cheap theatre, for at least cheap theatre is free. It is an attempt, systemic and deliberate, at taking away the rights of people to representation.

Vous vous souviendrez d'il y a quelques minutes, et bien sûr je m'en voudrais de conclure, de terminer, sans me souvenir avec toute la sincérité que je puisse commander des 18 années de travail de mon prédécesseur M. Jack Stokes de Schreiber, bien entendu, une communauté qui date depuis plus de 105 ans chez nous. Il a su implanter dans cette circonscription au fil des ans un service, une réputation à sa veille de mon départ et, plus important encore, celle de la représentation chez nous.

Si nous avons une consolation, c'est qu'après 32 ans, notre circonscription aura toujours été desservie par le parti de la conscience sociale, celui du Nouveau Parti démocratique, où le bienfait, le besoin des autres est toujours plus important que les aspirations politiques de certains et certaines.

C'est chez eux qu'on a trouvé, nous, M. Stokes et moi, l'inspiration. Chez eux c'était la beauté de l'âme, le besoin de suffire au quotidien, le service personnel. Pas d'alternative. Monsieur le Ministre, Monsieur le Premier Ministre, attention. Vous êtes en train de détruire systématiquement, délibérément, à cause de votre appétit, de votre soif politique, de vos politiques, de vos pensées, de votre philosophie, 32 ans de service assidu.

In conclusion, it's a sad day when a group of reformists get together. They get driven by expediency to do whatever they feel will work. Our riding has always been, from the beginning. It will soon be time to say good night by virtue of decree — you, Premier. Thirty-two years of faithful service to the good people of Lake Nipigon. Jack Stokes is here. He's omnipresent. He's very much here. I join him in thanking the confidence of the good people in Lake Nipigon.

I just saw, Mr Speaker — and they weren't too proud; they began to stoop — three ministers leave the House. Of course, they're busy elsewhere and yet it's only 8:30. Some of the others show absolutely no remorse.

I see the pain in the pages' faces because some of their ridings are going too. They'll be the last pages representing their ridings. They're in grade 7 and grade 8. They're not coming back. There's no hand-me-down here. If you've got a younger brother or sister, I don't care if they get 100% at school, the highest recommendations, medals from the principal — you're not going to get it, because it's gone. Not gone to heaven; it's gone to hell. He's responsible and he shows no remorse because he has another agenda. I could say a lot more. It's a sad day.

Jamais, never, did I think in 12 years that I would see in front of my very eyes the deliberate disintegration of what has been, for 27 ridings that are about to disappear, a legacy of first-class service. He's made it that way. He'll have to carry the guilt. He'll have to pay the



political price. No matter which way you twist it, it will come back to haunt you.

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** I would like to thank the honourable member for Lake Nipigon for his views, but it does remind me of the Shakespearean phrase, "All sound and fury, signifying nothing," because here is a case where we as a government are simply doing what many other governments have done in the course of their mandate, namely, taken a look at the census, reorganized ridings. Some ridings go, some ridings —

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. You'll each have a chance. I'll go in rotation.

2030

**Mr Clement:** The fact of the matter is that there are new ridings being created. This is not simply a destruction of ridings. There will actually be a new riding in my community of Brampton. The honourable member talked about simplicity and how simplistic the government's proposal is. The fact of the matter is that there are some areas that are going to be consolidated because of population shifts or population trends, and there are other areas, because of the higher population that has been the case over the last few years, that are actually adding a riding. So I would simply like to take the honourable member's discussion in this Legislature and perhaps amend what he said to make it much more in accordance with the facts of the case.

It reminds me of another famous Shakespearean line: "To thine own self be true." The fact of the matter is that this is utterly consistent with the message that this government has tried to portray: leading by example, trying to ensure that politicians and the political class that the opposition tries to defend is not exempt from the sorts of changes that are occurring in the rest of society. I think that's a good thing.

**Mr Frank Michlash (Kenora):** I would just like to thank the member for Lake Nipigon for his views. As we know, he's represented a riding in the north for a good many years, and I always look forward to his comments. They follow very much on the heels of the comments of a person who was an MP and an MPP in the Thunder Bay region, and his comments came through loud and clear to us during the hearings in Dryden. Of course I'm referring to Iain Angus. Iain was able to stand before the committee and convince a lot of these members who were on the committee who had never been in the north, had never been to hearings in the north, about what it was like to be both an MP and an MPP in the north and the different duties they would take on. I think Iain did an excellent job.

He also went back to say that we had a Premier who before the election indicated that there wasn't enough of a voice in the north, that northerners weren't making their own decisions, and who made a commitment to the people of northern Ontario in his document *A Voice for the North*. That was a document that paralleled the Common Sense Revolution, which the people down here were hearing about, but we were reading a different document in the north where the Premier was telling us that we needed more of a voice and we had to make

more of our decisions in the north. He very clearly indicated that the Premier was saying one thing up there and maybe a different thing down here and now he's actually fulfilling a commitment that he made that we knew little about during that campaign.

As well, we heard from, as the member for Lake Nipigon has indicated, a good number of people such as the president of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, who has indicated to the committee that this is just not a workable solution for northern Ontario and that it should go to a provincial boundaries commission, much the same as the feds went to a federal boundaries commission. I think that is the reason we have to bring back —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The time has expired.

**M. Bisson :** Aux commentaires du membre de Lac-Nipigon, qui amène les points saillants faisant affaire avec ce qui arrive dans le débat, le point que le membre a fait, je pense que c'est assez clair. C'est qu'il y a certains membres de l'Assemblée, plutôt les membres conservateurs, qui ne comprennent pas la réalité de la géographie de beaucoup des comtés qu'on trouve dans le nord de l'Ontario.

Monsieur le Président, comme vous le savez très bien, parce que vous y avez été vous-même quand monsieur le député l'a dit dans son discours, le comté de Lac-Nipigon, d'un bord à l'autre, si on prend la route, est 1000 milles de long. On entend des membres de l'Assemblée qui disent, «Mais écoute, si tu n'es pas capable de faire l'ouvrage dans ton comté et de trouver des moyens plus efficaces pour répondre aux besoins de tes citoyens, tu ne fais pas ta job.»

Eux autres, ils ne comprennent pas. Ils viennent des comtés où ça prend cinq minutes pour marcher d'un bord à l'autre. Puis là, il arrive un membre comme ça, qui a 1000 milles de géographie qu'il doit traverser pour aller d'un coin de son comté à l'autre, et les membres du gouvernement conservateur ont l'audace de dire qu'il a besoin de trouver des manières plus efficaces pour donner les services aux communautés.

Je pense franchement que ça démontre que le gouvernement ne comprend pas réellement les préoccupations et les problèmes du nord de l'Ontario. Ils ne comprennent pas qu'avec des comtés si grands, il prend beaucoup plus de temps pour se déplacer d'un bord du comté à l'autre pour rencontrer des citoyens.

J'aimerais dire de la tradition de M. Jack Stokes, pareil à M. Pouliot, que l'ouvrage qu'il a fait dans son comté jusqu'à date pour représenter les citoyens était exemplaire. Le député, M. Pouliot de Nipigon, prend toujours l'occasion d'aller d'un bord du comté à l'autre afin de parler à ses citoyens. Je pense qu'il parle avec certitude, et avec la croyance de ses convictions il dit que si tu commences à changer ces comtés-là et à faire dans le nord de l'Ontario 10 comtés de 15, ça va être beaucoup plus difficile.

**Le Vice-Président :** Monsieur le député de Lac-Nipigon, vous avez deux minutes.

**Mr Pouliot:** I thank my distinguished colleagues, learned colleagues, for their —



**The Deputy Speaker:** Sorry, I made a mistake. There is one more. The member for Niagara Falls.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** I commend the member from Stratford — the member from Nipigon — on his theatrics. We often lose his content but we all applaud his theatrics in the House.

On was on the road in Ottawa and London and I was also in the hearings on this bill in Toronto, and quite often the members opposite would talk about what a blow to democracy this bill was. Well, in the Niagara region there are over 250 elected politicians for a population of under 400,000 people. There are 30 regional politicians, 100-plus municipal politicians, 70 trustees, six MPPs, four MPs and about 50 Hydro commissioners: well over 250 elected politicians. This bill removes two of those — hardly what I would call a blow to democracy.

Quite often the members opposite point out PEI as the example we should follow. PEI has a federal member for every 30,000 people. If we followed that as our example here in Ontario, we'd have over 300 MPPs in the House. I think, as we find it ridiculous, most taxpayers would find that ridiculous.

Another thing they quite often talk about is the challenges of geography. When we were in Ottawa, we talked to a demographer who said there are over 11 languages commonly spoken in some ridings; for instance, Scarborough East. This presents a unique challenge. I asked that demographer if that same challenge would be there in the north. He said that it wouldn't. So there are challenges of geography in some places, other challenges in other ridings.

One of the things that most people found most offensive about the current system is that some ridings have six and a half times the voting power of other ridings because they have 19,000 voters compared to 125,000 voters in another riding. That was offensive to the people whose vote counts for six and a half times less than that of the people in the smaller riding.

**Mr Bradley:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Despite the remarks of the member for Niagara Falls, I think we should extend congratulations to him on the birth of his daughter. He's back in the Legislative Assembly but he hasn't had any sleep the last five nights.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It's not a point of order, but I think we're all happy to wish you all the best.

The member for Lake Nipigon, you have two minutes.

**Mr Pouliot:** Allow me, please, to thank my distinguished and admired colleagues from both the Liberals and the Conservatives.

The member for Niagara Falls, let me add my sincere congratulations. You've almost deterred me, sir, to mention to you as you compare your riding to the service that we provide up north: Before you talk the talk, walk the walk. Come with us. Come with us on a small journey.

I have with me what the members for Niagara Falls, the neophytes, the novice and others, were asked to answer when it came to Bill 81. This is a leaked document from the Premier's office.

First: The number of seats and MPPs in the Legislature is being cut from 130 to 103. Why are you firing 27 of your colleagues? "No one is being fired. Each MPP was

voted in by their constituents until the next provincial election." Now, that's profound. That's a good deal of wisdom.

Question number two: How much difference is it really going to make? "Twenty-seven fewer MPPs means 27 fewer offices." Profound. Disraeli must be turning.

**2040**

Question number three: Won't this reduction in seats mean that northern Ontario will be underrepresented? Answer — Tories, whiz kids: "We are obliged to have representation in the Legislature on area population." It's out of the bag. The bag of snakes has decreed that population will rule out, regardless of what happens.

Question number four: Won't some ridings be too big? "Well, the Liberals and the NDP" —

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time has expired. Please take your seat.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before we continue, I'd like you to recognize in the gallery the former Speaker of the House, David Warner. Nothing has changed. Further debate?

**Mr Bisson:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I would ask for unanimous consent for the member from Nipigon to have another 30 minutes to give yet another speech.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Agreed. Let him go.

**Mrs Marland:** Agreed.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed? No.

**Mr Bisson:** Who said no?

**Mr Wildman:** Is it agreed or not?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Let it be known that the member for Lake Nipigon said no.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate? I hope that the House will remain quiet. The member for Peterborough.

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'm getting tired, getting up and down here. It was renowned, sir. You are renowned.

It is my privilege to speak on Bill 81. Before I speak, I would like to set the stage for why I believe I am qualified to speak to this particular bill. First of all, I spent six days on the road listening to the people of this province. I have also in my former life travelled this province extensively as a sales representative, so I know about distances in the north; I know about the weather in the north.

**Mr Laughren:** One of those travelling salesman.

**Mr Stewart:** I was one of those fellows — and some fine people in northern Ontario as well as the south. Probably most important, I learned to appreciate what a fine airline you have in northern Ontario, Bearskin Airlines. You are most fortunate and privileged to have a fine mode of transportation, as that is, sir.

The contents of Bill 81 should not be a surprise to anyone in this House, or indeed members of the public. On page 8 of the Common Sense Revolution, we stated quite clearly that we would reduce the number of MPPs and we would change the boundaries to reflect the federal boundaries. During the campaign we were told that government was too big, too fat and too costly. We were also told that people were tired of footing the bill for



governments that didn't listen or respond to their needs and their concerns.

We all know that adding more politicians, creating more programs and spending more money is not the answer. We need a more efficient and affordable government at all levels, a more accountable and open government. We as MPPs, I believe, are going to have to learn how to work smarter and work better. We must learn to work more efficiently and more effectively. We are asking the taxpayer to change, but we in this House are not ready to change ourselves. I cannot tolerate that type of attitude, when we are asking the people out there to change and we cannot do it.

I say Bill 81, then, lives up to the promise we made prior to the election. For the first time since 1933, the number of politicians at Queen's Park will be reduced. Since 1933, there have not been any changes. I think it's about time that at least it was looked at or considered.

Come the next election, there will be 103 MPPs instead of 130. Fewer MPPs means fewer salaries and fewer staff members. It also means lower overhead and related costs, resulting in \$11 million of saving per year. I know that some of our friends here and some of the presenters suggested that \$11 million was a drop in the bucket. In the eyes of some of our opposition, \$11 million is minimal. I can tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that the people of this province believe that \$11 million is a lot of money, and I would suggest to you that possibly that \$11 million could be reinvested in health care and in education. Wouldn't that be good? Wouldn't you agree with that? I think you would, and I think the people outside this building would also agree with that.

By realigning provincial ridings to match the federal boundaries, we are making it easier for voters to know who represents them at each level of government, making government simpler for our constituents. Confusion will be eliminated.

Let me give you a for instance in the riding that I represent. On the west side of my riding there is a village and a township that in the federal elections are in the riding of Victoria-Haliburton. On the east, we have seven municipalities that are in the Hastings-Peterborough riding and yet vote federally in my riding. I can remember going out during the campaign and talking to the people in the northern part of the township of Cavan and suggesting to them that I would like their support and I would like them to vote for me, and they were saying, "Gary, we can't." I said: "Why? Are you of another party?" "No. We want to vote for you, but we have to vote in Victoria-Haliburton." I said: "No, you don't. You are in my riding." So the confusion will be eliminated.

**Mr Conway:** Lots of Liberals up there in Cavan, as I recall.

**Mr Stewart:** Yes, but they have changed, and that's the nice part of it. They have seen the light and become Tories.

Bill 81 offers potential for greater savings by reducing duplication and overlap in areas of election staffing, enumeration, mapping and administration; again, savings that we could reinvest in the people of this province. Voters' lists will be used for both federal and provincial elections, and cooperative measures between Elections

Ontario and Elections Canada will contribute to a better system.

Speaking of cooperation, I believe that with the same boundaries being looked after by both the MPP and the MP, possibly working together with cooperation, that will be of assistance to the people in those ridings, and I believe that this bill could enable us to compare policy and performance between both levels of government.

Reducing the number of MPPs sends a strong signal that savings will start at the top and that everyone, including politicians, must be part of the solution. For those who don't know what I'm talking about, let me explain. It's called leading by example. If we expect the local governments and bureaucrats to do better with less, we politicians should, as well, do much of the same.

During committee hearings, opposition members attempted to insert a political divide between rural and urban Ontario. They were suggesting that if the boundaries got bigger, then only the people from urban centres would be elected.

2050

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs Margaret Marland):** I ask the member for Fort York and the member for Cochrane North to respect the people who have the floor. At the moment, you do not have the floor and interjections are out of order. Having entered the chamber, I realize the enthusiasm with which you are here, but if you could contain it, it would be appreciated. Thank you.

**Mr Stewart:** What was suggested was that with the change in the boundaries the rural people would not be able to get elected. All the representatives would centre around the towns, the major centres in those ridings. I suggest to you that that's wrong, and examples of that are exactly what is happening in this House at the moment.

In the Victoria-Haliburton riding, the city of Lindsay is the largest, yet the representative comes from rural Haliburton. Cobourg is the biggest city and town in Northumberland, yet the representative comes from Colborne. In the riding of Prince Edward, Picton is the largest centre, yet the representative comes from the rural part of that riding. Owen Sound, the same type of situation: the representative comes from the rural part of the riding. So I'm trying to suggest that both rural and urban will have the opportunity to have a representative and will work very closely and well together.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** Peaceful coexistence.

**Mr Stewart:** I often think, Madam Speaker, when you get interrupted, it truly means that what you're saying is factual.

We, as MPPs, must work closer with our federal counterparts and indeed our municipal councils. Our goal of serving the taxpayers will be achieved if we can work together.

We also hear that we deal with more issues as MPPs than do MPs. Let me tell you this: The MPs deal with unemployment insurance, old age security, Canada pension. Aren't those things that people deal with every day? In fact we, as MPPs, also deal with the people every day, dealing with social services, family support and indeed WCB. Both levels of government have their own



respective issues to deal with, and I believe that if MPs can do it, indeed we can, with the qualified people that we have in this province to serve.

Many people support this bill. Indeed, the Timmins Chamber of Commerce surveyed its members and found overwhelming support for Bill 81.

**Mr Marchese:** What did they say?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Fort York is out of order.

**Mr Stewart:** The chamber in Ottawa did much the same thing. Yes, we heard opposition to this bill, indeed we did. We did in London. The first five presenters we heard were against this bill. The first four were ex-MPPs of the previous government. Can you imagine? The fifth was the president of the local Liberal association.

**Mr Wildman:** Oh, Jeez, how did he get in?

**Mr Stewart:** Well, you've always been together. Why would you not be together as presenters?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I wouldn't like to have to name you or warn you, but —

**Mr Len Wood:** I just want to hear about the two —

**The Acting Speaker:** I say to the member for Cochrane North that it is not appropriate to have continuous interjections. I have asked you once. I've asked the member for Fort York once. I reluctantly would ask the same thing of the member for Algoma. If you do not comply with the standing orders, which do not permit interjections, then you will leave me no alternative.

**Mr Stewart:** The challenge here is to find other ways to improve representation, not to reject a move to reduce government. Both new and old forms of technology — and I'm talking about fax machines, telephones, Internet, 800 numbers and the old-fashioned way called writing a letter or holding town hall meetings in many communities — will help to overcome the distance factor and make sure that the people of the ridings have an opportunity for their say.

In business we have a saying that says, "Plan your work and work your plan." Remember what I said: We must learn to work smarter. The point here is we must stop saying, "This won't work," but rather we must work together to find a real solution in our quest to doing things better.

Rural and urban Ontario are prepared for the implementation of Bill 81. I represent a both urban and rural constituency and I am hearing in my riding that what Bill 81 represents is what should be done.

When I was in the north on the hearings I kept hearing the words, "The north is unique." Indeed the north is unique. It is beautiful, it is scenic, it is friendly, it is hospitable and it's exactly the same as the rest of Ontario. Indeed it is unique in all ways. We were hearing up there that they were representing rural, they were representing urban, they were representing commercial, they were representing industrial, they were representing agriculture, they were representing forestry, they were representing hunters, geologists, fishermen, and I could go on. You know what? Those are all of the types of people that I represent in the riding of Peterborough. So what I'm saying is, we are all unique in this province.

The opposition, as we know, had the usual criticism of this bill but offered no alternatives. I'd like to thank the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for stating during the committee hearings that the opposition is not opposed to redistribution. The member for Cochrane South in Timmins — and I quote — he didn't have a problem with the reduction of ridings. Let me personally say thanks to all of the members of the NDP caucus who, while they were on the Bill 81 clause-by-clause, did not once bring forward an amendment to this bill. Ladies and gentlemen, that says it all.

In conclusion, let me say that reducing the size and cost of government is a key part of building an attractive climate for investment and growth in our province. Our government is absolutely committed to creating that kind of growth environment in this province, and it is happening. Every change we've initiated since taking office in June 1995 is steadfastly linked to that goal. While we still have a long way to go and much more work to do to reach our goal of a better Ontario, we are on the right track. The evidence is there: our plan is working.

We were elected to bring real fundamental change to the government of Ontario and that's what we are doing by reducing the number of politicians. Our direction is to continue to provide a real fundamental change that benefits the province and the people of this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Gravelle:** Certainly I want to comment on the remarks by the member for Peterborough. I must admit we had one concession tonight which is remarkable: The member for Peterborough admitted that some of the cases they deal with are family support problems. We've had a very difficult time getting the members of the government to admit they are dealing with family support problems. That's some progress.

2100

What the member said in terms of amendments and listening to the people and their presentations was also interesting. Certainly our caucus put forward several amendments in clause-by-clause which were rejected rather out of hand by the government side. It made me think in terms of the hearings themselves. We had to endure the member for Scarborough East, actually before the hearings, because before the hearings began in Dryden he went on CBC Radio and said publicly that there would be no changes. In other words, there was absolutely no point to these hearings, which I found very depressing and upsetting.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Insulting.

**Mr Gravelle:** It was very insulting. May I say, though, that when we and the presenters tried to explain to him the difficulties in terms of travel and distance and how we want to be very connected to our constituents, he said he understood about travel because he had to travel 30 kilometres every day to Queen's Park. It is very sad.

Before wrapping up I want to say something about the previous speaker, the member for Lake Nipigon, my friend and neighbour. His eloquent plea was very special, and I want to praise him. As those of us in northwestern Ontario know, the member for Lake Nipigon is truly a legend in northern Ontario and a man I very much admire and certainly appreciate. All the members of the government would do very well to listen to what he had to say.



**Mr Wildman:** I listened with interest to the presentation by the member for Peterborough. He talked a lot about the problems of rural as opposed to urban representation and he never mentioned how far across any of these large ridings in southern Ontario are. I wonder if they are as much as 400 miles from one end to the other.

More than that I'm intrigued by his comment that modern technology will make it possible for us to properly represent our ridings. I'm still trying to figure out exactly how I get into a fax machine. I'm trying to figure out how I can fax myself to the next meeting. I'd also like to know from the member how he really believes that geography isn't too important.

Finally, my most important question is, when he raises the question that there weren't amendments provided by the New Democrats, as opposed to the Liberals: Does that mean the member for Scarborough East was incorrect when he said there weren't going to be any changes to this bill? Did we misunderstand him? Was the intent of the Conservatives that they didn't have any ideas of their own on how to change this and they were waiting for ideas to be put forward by the New Democrats so we could amend this bill? Or was it the case that this government had no intention whatever of changing anything in this legislation and simply were going forward as a façade, to pretend they were listening to the people of Ontario when they intended to pass the legislation as originally written, no matter what anybody said to them in the hearings?

**M<sup>me</sup> Sandra Papatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** Je veux dire à notre député de Lac-Nipigon que j'étais très amusée. Did I say that well, Gilles? Oui ? Votre discours, c'était un peu dramatique. Mais au membre après M. le député de Lac-Nipigon je veux dire que vous avez oublié quelques détails. Le cas d'aujourd'hui est une chose très différente. That would be my first phrase en français. Je sais aussi que je dois beaucoup pratiquer, mais un jour je veux faire le discours totalement en français.

What our dear friend across the way in the Conservative Party forgot to mention, and what all members must know, is that the Premier's office has increased its budget for the year 1996-97. To do this in the face of cutting the number of MPPs in this House is simply dishonest, is simply a kind of policy that is dishonest.

We as opposition members have to come clean with the members of the public to make them understand that while the government wants to silence the voice of the elected people in this House, at the same time it increases the number of staff people in the Premier's office, increases the budget somewhere in the vicinity of \$1.7 million to \$2.6 million. That is a massive increase in a different arm of government, where in fact the control of this government lies, not with these elected officials of the Conservative Party, no, in the whiz kids that we all read about in the Premier's office. That, my friends, is the real agenda of government: Get rid of the elected voice; get rid of the people from the north, decrease their numbers, because their issues are so relevant today. That in fact is the true agenda of government.

**Mr Bisson:** To the member who just presented his views on this particular bill, I thought his whole speech was passing strange and actually quite amusing in regard

to some of the comments he made. I thought what was particularly interesting was to say that unique was all the same. I thought that was a very deep thought and something quite well thought through on the part of the member, to say that when he travelled to northern Ontario, he found the north to be a place that was quite unique, quite the same as the people of Peterborough. I think it just shows that the members don't quite understand what the issues are that are facing northern Ontario and are not able to properly address them from their particular perspective.

The other thing I thought was interesting was that the member said he urged the members of the opposition to lead by example. I would say to the member, I wish you would do the same. You can lead by example by resigning your seat this minute. We'll promise not to call a by-election, and we'll save some money in the interim. So, I would like to see the member lead by example and resign his seat to let us know that he really means what he talks about when he talks about leading by example.

Then he tried to purport that people in northern Ontario who came before the committee did not speak in opposition to this government's proposal, that indeed the only people who spoke against it, by God, were four New Democrats and one Liberal in London. I was in Timmins at the hearings, and virtually almost all of the presenters were vehemently opposed to what your government had proposed. There were only two presentations that were in favour; one from the chamber of commerce, surprise, surprise. It's like you going to the labour council and getting an endorsement. The chamber of commerce from Hearst actually attacked you. So, indeed, people in northern Ontario spoke quite eloquently and quite well and said: "This is preposterous, doesn't make sense. Don't go forward with it."

As for amendments, I think our House leader said why we didn't put forward amendments. The last thing, in regard to new technologies, why don't we invent a transporter? Then they can beam you all out of here.

**Mr Stewart:** I'm just absolutely elated that the minute I finished speaking about six or seven all wanted to get up at once to take a shot at me. I believe what I said prior, and that is the fact that when you happen to be saying factual things and calling it the way it is, people tend to heckle and carry on that much more.

As far as the chamber of commerce goes that the member for Cochrane South made a comment on, unless the chamber of commerce in Timmins is different from the ones any place else in this province, they represent a major part of the population in these particular areas.

**Mr Bisson:** I know they do. They're special interest groups just like you.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Member for Cochrane South, come to order.

**Mr Stewart:** As far as the member for Scarborough East, who supposedly has made some statement that it wasn't going to be changed, I did not hear it. If my colleague from up north — pardon me, Mr Wildman, I can't remember where you're from; wherever he's from — made a comment about it, then that is his, because I don't know whether it is factual or not.

*Interjections.*



**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr Stewart:** What I'm saying about modern technology is that there is certainly modern technology in many of the areas in Ontario. But I did make one comment that the old-fashioned way of writing letters — and many of us, when we want to have authorization to do things on behalf of constituents, what do we do? What do I do? We ask them to sign or give us something in writing to authorize us to do it. Writing letters and that type of communication is certainly not modern, it is not expensive and I can assure you it'll do the job. What I'm saying is that we have to do things differently and smarter, and I do know that the folks from northern Ontario can do just that.

2110

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? A point of privilege, the member for Port Arthur.

**Mr Gravelle:** Madam Speaker, on a point of privilege: I feel very offended that the member for Peterborough would simply address me as the member for whatever. Obviously, that shows his lack of regard for those of us in the north if he's going to simply treat us in that manner and certainly treat my riding in that manner.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you for your point of privilege. I tend to agree with the member. I would give the member for Peterborough an opportunity to withdraw or apologize for that remark.

**Mr Stewart:** Madam Speaker, I was not talking about this gentleman at all. I suggested it was Mr Wildman.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Take your seat, please. This might be a good opportunity to remind all members to refer to each other by your ridings. If you don't know, you have the sheet on your desk and you can refer to that to remind you. I would ask the members to come to order. Further debate?

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I'm very happy finally to be able to rise in my place and to speak on the riding redistribution bill. It's a bill, obviously, that is very important to the people of northern Ontario and my constituents. As many members have said tonight, we did travel on the general government committee, and I had the privilege two Saturdays ago to attend the hearings in Timmins that many of my fellow members have mentioned in the last little while.

To start off, I would just like to address the opening remarks of the member for Peterborough when he said that members in here act as if this was a big surprise, because of course in the Common Sense Revolution they talked about this all the time before the election and of course during the election. That's right. The member for Peterborough is correct about that.

I'd like to point out to the member for Peterborough that not one member from the government side was elected in northern Ontario, and that is one of the reasons why that never happened, because the people of northern Ontario were aware of what this particular political party, the Progressive Conservative Party — if you can still say it's progressive nowadays. They rejected that outright. I'd just like to remind you, member, they rejected that outright because they understood the diminution of power of northern Ontario in this place, the place that speaks for

all Ontarians, would be a result of that reduction. That's exactly why this government is doing that, and that's exactly why we as northerners are fighting that.

I want to make it clear for myself but also on behalf of all the members in the Liberal caucus that we are not per se against riding redistribution. We know that in times of government downsizing, in trying to increase efficiencies in all levels of government, that even the political wing needs to be looked at. We're not against examining redistribution and seeing how we can more effectively in maybe a more cost-effective way represent the people of Ontario. What we thoroughly object to, though, is the holus-bolus acceptance of the federal riding boundaries to represent the representation in this House, the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

The federal government, through long study over the last few years, commenced I believe by the previous federal government and completed by this federal government, had studied, based on the last census, how best Canadians should be represented in their Parliament in Ottawa, the nation's capital. They did their very best, and they came up with a solution. Some MPs may agree with that and some may not, but there seems to be some agreement that for federal representation right across this country, in 10 provinces and two territories, that that's the way it is going to be.

But to then say that that representation on the national level be adopted at the provincial level is really an absurd notion. I'm sure many members in this House, especially during second reading debate, have mentioned that if you were to equate that right across this country, province by province, then the Prince Edward Island Legislature, which is a most beautiful building in Charlottetown, would have four members in it. Of course if Alberta were to do the same, they would have 26 members in the Alberta Legislature.

It is a foolish notion, an absurd notion to say that therefore the Ontario Legislature here at Queen's Park should be made up of the same number of seats, with the same distribution, as our federal House. It just doesn't make sense, and it doesn't make sense not only because of the population of Ontario, but also because of the different types of issues and the frequency and the level of the issues we deal with in the Ontario Legislature compared to our federal Parliament. As many members have said previously in this House, the issues are very distinct from each House.

I would say, and my MP, Ben Serré from Timiskaming, also agrees, that the type of issues the provincial politician deals with primarily, maybe with the exception of the Canada pension plan and unemployment insurance, are much closer to the everyday life of people in this province. We deal with issues that I think involve people on a day-to-day level; I call them the bread-and-butter issues.

Health care, especially today with hospital closings, and in the north, doctor shortages, are vital issues that people care about. In my town of New Liskeard that I live outside of, we are losing a tremendous number of doctors to the United States. This is causing a shortage and many of my constituents in that area do not have a family practitioner. In my riding, a northern riding,



people come to my office and ask me to try to help in that situation. I'm sure that if somebody doesn't have a doctor in Mississauga, they just don't think first off to go to their MPP because they don't have a doctor. There really is a difference in the issues we deal with and maybe in northern Ontario, how people deal with those issues and who they go to see to try to have them rectified.

Other issues — of course, education: another area that's really under pressure from this government. What we're seeing with the cutbacks in education, and especially in large rural areas of northern Ontario with very small school boards with very small provincial grants additionally being squeezed, greater additional pressures to the education system with teachers and teaching assistants being laid off and schools being closed.

Because of the vast distances, the one sort of leader who's perceived to be able to help in those situations is the provincial member of Parliament, and people come to our office, asking us to attend meetings and try to help with these situations.

So health care and education.

Roads are another major concern in northern Ontario. Because of the great distances, we're on the roads a lot. We are on the roads to get to our employment and to visit our families and, of course, with the inclement weather we have in the winter, more than southern Ontario, the condition of the roads, the maintenance of the roads, is even doubly important. It's a sad fact but the traumatic death rate in northeastern Ontario is twice that of the province as a whole. A lot of that can be attributed to the death rate on our highways. That's a sad fact and I wish it wasn't true, but it is and because that becomes a larger concern for people I represent, it's in the provincial domain and they come to the MPP to try to have those situations rectified. We're talking about everyday, bread-and-butter issues that people are involved in and come to the MPP.

Another difference between a northern riding and a southern riding is that we have a lot of the resource extraction industries such as mining and forestry. Unfortunately, even though we have maybe fewer of these accidents today, these industries have heavy rates of industrial accidents, and therefore, we have a much greater caseload of Workers' Compensation Board cases. With some of the reforms over the last few years, some of this has diminished somewhat, but still our caseload is very large. Because of the distances and the infrequency of the visits from the different worker advisers because of the northern distances, the MPP offices are used with great frequency to try to rectify these cases. So we have a heavier workload in those areas.

It's different. You talk to a lot of the MPs and they will admit that the workload is different, not that maybe it's even less but it's different; maybe it's more intense in some cases.

The main argument we've made in northern Ontario is that we feel that in the Ontario Legislature, with a population of almost 11 million people now in Ontario, to keep the representation of MPPs at 15 north of the French River would be ample. In fact, to answer the member for Peterborough who said that at least one

opposition party had not moved an amendment, we did move an amendment that we thought was positive, that we weren't going against the whole bill but felt that with redistribution, if you were going to do it this way, at least retain the 15 ridings north of the French River to try to bring some balance.

2120

The reason we asked for that, and I'd like to talk to the people who are watching out there, is that with the redistribution of the seats there's an unequal cutting happening: 33% of the northern ridings are going to be reduced. We're going from 15 down to 10, so we lose five seats. But in southern Ontario or right across the province it's a 20% reduction. So there is a disproportionate reduction in the representation of members from northern Ontario. This is really galling to the citizens of northern Ontario, that once again we have been hit with lack of representation. Our representation is being reduced and northerners see an ever-diminishing voice being expressed in their Legislature in the capital city of Toronto.

It's always been a frustration for northern members of all political parties to know that there are only 15 of us north of the French River and it always has been a real battle in a Legislature of 125 and then 130, 10 years ago, to try to make a mark, to try to make an impression on the Legislature and with the civil servants we work with on a day-to-day basis, that there are special needs and requirements in northern Ontario.

Unfortunately, in the committee hearings as we toured the north, the member for Scarborough East denied that there were any differences in the culture or the people of northern Ontario. He said in fact in Timmins that the only difference he could see between north and south was the weather and that was the only difference between the two.

**Mr Conway:** What? Repeated?

**Mr Ramsay:** That's what he said. He repeated it many times. We quite frankly were very much insulted by that. Living in northern Ontario and having actually grown up in southern Ontario, I know that northern Ontario is a very different place from the south. We are not blessed with the wonderful megalopolis that grows out from Toronto through the Golden Horseshoe area, both east and west, the wonderful suburbs where people live with the high industrial and commercial assessment of the municipalities that provide great infrastructure for the peoples who live in the greater Toronto and Golden Horseshoe area.

We live in a very different part of the province where we don't have that wealth. It's ironic because over the years we have generated more wealth for this province than any other part or region of this province, but that wealth, because of the unorganized area of the north, the inability of our municipalities to directly tax that wealth, goes directly to provincial and federal coffers. So the wealth of the north, while it has created jobs and we're very grateful for that, has generated much of the wealth of southern Ontario over the years. We live with that and we accept that and maybe things are going to be changing with all the amalgamations that are being spoken of in northern Ontario.



We're not asking for life any differently up there. We're northerners by choice and I would say the vast majority of northerners love northern Ontario and wouldn't leave as long as there's opportunity. It's lack of opportunity that sometimes forces our citizens and many of our children to leave northern Ontario to seek opportunity and sometimes fame and fortune elsewhere.

One of the areas of this redistribution I want to talk of that the member of Peterborough had related is that he said members of the opposition were pitting urban and rural people against each other in some of the arguments they were using.

To clarify the point that I think the member for Peterborough was trying to make, based on some of the discussion I and other members were having in committee, what we were saying, and the new Cochrane-James Bay riding is a prime example of where this problem is going to be, was that the urban centre will dominate the new region. In the case of the new Cochrane-James Bay riding, Timmins will be the biggest urban centre in that riding, and then along the northern Highway 11 corridor of Smooth Rock Falls and Kapuskasing and Hearst, and then after that basically open territory, the James Bay lowlands up to James Bay; then you get into the native communities along James Bay and Hudson Bay.

Basically from that designation, and one could guess, primarily a member from Timmins will consistently — of whatever party — win that particular seat because of the strong population base she or he will come from.

It's going to be very difficult, for example, for native people from the James Bay coast to ever send a representative to this Legislature, because again the main population centre is dominated from Timmins. It's going to be very difficult for, say, a mayor from Hearst, as previous mayors from Hearst have represented the Cochrane North riding, or a mayor from Kapuskasing to travel those distances during an election campaign to raise her profile high enough in order to get the attention and the support of people from, say, Timmins, where most of the votes are going to come from in that riding. So we certainly do worry about that and are very concerned about that domination.

That brings me to the point I'd really like to suggest to this government. While I've said to the government members we are not against riding redistribution, what we would be willing to accept is: let's have a look from an Ontario perspective at this issue. We should embark upon our own commission and study this for our own purposes, if the goal is to try to reduce the number of seats, if that's what you want to do, at least with the goal of representing the people of Ontario in the fairest and best way possible. I think considerations such as I've just mentioned in order to get some representation from some of our native peoples in northern Ontario might be one place we could start when we look at northern representation.

One of the problems we've always had with the alignment of our ridings in northern Ontario that prevents direct native representation is that our riding boundaries run primarily north and south in northern Ontario. What we would need to create, if we had that opportunity to look at this through an Ontario perspective, is some sort

of riding running east and west across the very north of our province so that our native communities would be assured that native people could elect a native representative to come down to represent their views at Queen's Park directly.

I know that many of my colleagues who have large aboriginal populations in their ridings do the very best they can to represent the native peoples of northern Ontario, but I'm sure if we put our minds to it we could devise a system, without increasing the number of seats, that would, for example, for this particular group of people, ensure that they have strong representation for the life of this Parliament down here at Queen's Park. I think that would be a noble enterprise and would be a start to redress some of the problems we have with this particular bill.

I guess the reason we ask for this is that the phrase that seems to come up at committee hearing after committee hearing when you travel the province is "community of interest." When you arbitrarily force communities together in artificial boundaries for provincial representation, you don't necessarily have the very best community of interest involved with that riding. There again, the community of interest that was decided upon through compromises by the federal redistribution commission was based on federal representation, based on the issues that federal politicians have to deal with at our capital Parliament in Ottawa. So again, I think we would have to look at what would be the community of interest for the different communities we have in Ontario, based on Ontario issues, based on Ontario representation for the Legislature. So again, it's another reason why I think we should take a look at redistribution from an Ontario perspective and not just accept the federal representation. I think that is very important.

One small matter but one I'd like to address is the new riding that I hope to have the privilege to represent when I run again, if I'm successful in that. Now it is called Timiskaming-Cochrane and part of that name change from Timiskaming stems from the fact that now the riding is going to be extended I suppose about 150 miles north to Cochrane, but it also will extend about the same distance again south of the present boundary — not quite the same distance south but another maybe 60 miles south of the present boundary. That would include the very big town of Sturgeon Falls, and further south, almost to Georgian Bay, Alban and Noelville.

The people in that south end don't have any name recognition in the new name of the riding. The present name of the Timiskaming riding federally is Timiskaming-French River. The term "French River" denotes the history and the geography of the south area of Timiskaming and west of Lake Nipissing, part of the very famous fur-trading route. The history is there. It denotes the history of the area and how it was developed, but it also denotes the present geography and the identification that people have that they live in the French River-West Nipissing area.

2130

I was talking to my MP over the weekend. Unfortunately he did not have the opportunity to bring forward a name change and thought — and he's probably



right — it might have been too cumbersome to add a third name to it, but there again, I think that's something maybe on the provincial level. I would like to see some sort of attempt to capture the community at the south end of the new riding there so that they feel a part of it. One way of doing that would be to include the name of the southern part of the new riding in that riding so they have a sense of belonging, because the people of west Nipissing would not have any sort of connection with Cochrane for sure and only some connection with Timiskaming.

The judicial geographic region of Timiskaming actually falls short of the town of Temagami, so the people in west Nipissing really haven't had a close association with the name of Timiskaming and the old geographic boundary of Timiskaming. I hope we would find some remedy so that we can include the west Nipissing-French River people in that name since they are going to be captured by the new riding.

As I said, I was very pleased to be part of the committee hearings in Timmins a couple of Saturdays ago. It was the standing committee on general government and it was Saturday, November 23 that we met there at the La Ronde Cultural Centre in Timmins. I was pleased to be there, and I would like to just go through some of the comments some of the people made as they made representations.

One of the pleasures of travelling on the road is that we get to meet new Ontarians and sometimes get reacquainted with others whom we've met in the past and sometimes get reacquainted with old friends. One of those old friends was the past member for Cochrane North, René Fontaine, who actually drove down from Hearst that morning. I think in earlier testimony that I was going to quote from, he mentioned he had left at 6 o'clock that morning from Hearst to get to Cochrane and then down to Timmins. He went on to talk about the drive he had to take from Hearst to Timmins in order to come to our committee hearings, to give us only a small example of the distance that a member would have to travel, say on a Saturday morning, if he was the elected member and had to attend a meeting there.

He made a very good point and with great passion — if you know René Fontaine and the passion that he has — and I'd like to read some of this for you. He gave the personal side of this, which not all members may appreciate because of living in small ridings, or some of those people watching who maybe aren't involved in the job and don't know some of the sacrifices. He said:

"I came over here just to tell you it's inhuman for this riding, the way it's going to be. Inhuman. Immoral on top of that. I'm telling you, a young MPP with family, she won't survive. It'll be a divorce. We don't sleep at home every night, and we've got a hard time to sleep home on the weekend when we come because on the way through from Cochrane to Smooth Rock Falls to Kap I had to stop in Val Rita for a 50th anniversary. Came home on Saturday night all the time at 12. Leave the next afternoon because I have to go on the plane. Sometimes I had to go to Red Lake or Pickle Lake and back to Toronto for a vote on Bill 8 or Bill 31. I did it to the detriment of family, which were older, and my wife. The way they're

going to arrange this thing today, that's going to happen all over the place."

It was a very poignant statement the member had made about how physically challenging it is going to be in the future for members to represent some of these new ridings in the north. Mr Fontaine was relating some of the experiences he had there as a member from 1985 to 1990, when he represented the great riding of Cochrane North.

I just want to point out another quote from this Hansard that just shows you how little some members know of our area. This comes from the member for Scarborough East, who had travelled to Timmins. In referring to Mr Fontaine's remarks he said:

"Thank you, Mr Fontaine. I'm intrigued at Mr Wood's comments," because he had made some more comments supporting Mr Fontaine. He said, "The people from this community and from south of here that we had breakfast with said that the four-laning of the highways, not just around here but North Bay south to Toronto" — I'd like to stop here because there are no four-lane highways just around here when you're speaking in Timmins at all. There are maybe two miles coming into Timmins but there are no real four-lane highways going anywhere other than just to take the commuter traffic to some of the smaller hamlets outside of Timmins. So again there's a misperception about the transportation system of northern Ontario and how easy it might be for us to get around.

Other comments were made that obviously the northern members will have to change how they operate their offices, that they should be getting into more high-tech equipment to communicate with their constituents. I certainly am not against technology and in fact embrace the modern technology, especially in the communications area, where it has facilitated much easier and faster communication than has ever been possible. I'm sure many people would agree that we wonder today how we ever got along without a fax machine and a cell phone. Primarily we've only had those things for about 15 years, and they're tremendous.

But the nature of the work is that it's not always possible to deal with a constituent, say, on a video conference when you want to talk to her about the abusive relationship she's in and her problem is trying to find a shelter she can take her children to so she can find some protection from that abusive spouse. These are not discussions one has over teleconferences, with a technician in Cochrane and a technician in the Haileybury School of Mines, which is a very fine facility in Haileybury very near to my office that I could use, and hopefully, with some increased resources, maybe could even afford.

Somehow, with the disillusionment of the political process and politicians, I think it's doubly important today to keep the physical contact between the politician and constituents as much as possible. I said to many presenters there — only three were pro the riding realignment — that in this day of high tech maybe we need a little more high touch, that maybe it is important that with the larger ridings I still get to as many 50th anniversaries and other events in the different communities as I can. By and large, that is the only way you can really stay in contact with your constituents.



People are not angered enough to pick up the phone or to write a letter on everyday issues, but when you bump into them in a social environment, because of the relationship rural northern politicians have with most of their constituents, and knowing a lot of them and their knowing us, they are not hesitant at all, and I welcome that, to bring forward a view. That's exactly the type of representation that people in rural ridings expect and want from their members. I would think that the majority of members with the longest tenure in this place are probably those who have that sort of relationship with their constituents.

The point I'm making is that it's going to be more and more difficult to maintain that one-on-one personal relationship with one's constituents with the very vast distances we have in these new northern ridings. The distance of my riding will probably be at least 400 miles from the south end to the north end, as the crow flies, and a bit longer by road. So it is going to be challenging to service it properly.

2140

I would hope, as obviously, unfortunately, it is going to be a reality, that the Legislative Assembly sees fit to make sure there are adequate resources in the new budgets, with the savings that are going to accrue with these reductions, so that if I was successful next time in the new riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane, I would be able to have some sort of satellite office up in Cochrane, a satellite office in Sturgeon Falls, where maybe even only on a part-time basis there would be some staff, that people could drop in and talk to staff face to face, one on one, about their problems; a place that I could go after leaving here on a Thursday night; to be able to fly to Timmins in this case, get a car and go up to Cochrane, to be able to see some people maybe once a month or once every two months up in Cochrane, to do the same in Sturgeon and the other centres, so that we could have that direct contact.

I think that is very important. My only fear about this redistribution is that northern Ontario is going to have a weaker voice, that it is going to be more difficult, but not impossible, to bring that representation. It might have to be that the hours spent at Queen's Park would have to be reduced in order to spend more time over the larger constituency. I think that is something the successful candidates after the next election are going to have to work out in an agreement, with an accord with their constituents, as to how they want to see themselves represented.

If I am successful, I will certainly do the best I can, but I only wish that the members of the government side would reconsider the redistribution plans they have for northern Ontario and that, for once, in this case they would say that maybe an Ontario solution would be the way to go about this.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I want to make a few comments on the long dissertation by the member for Timiskaming. First of all, I notice that he referred to a former member of the Legislature, M. René Fontaine, who was the member for Cochrane North. I want to say that M. Fontaine was someone who spent a lot of time

representing his part of Ontario and was a good representative of Cochrane North and was a very good Minister of Northern Development and Mines. The present Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development and Mines would be wise perhaps to read some of M. Fontaine's speeches and some of the comments that M. Fontaine made. He would I think be much wiser if he were to do that.

I want to also comment that the member for Timiskaming points out that northern Ontario is going to lose considerably in terms of representation if this bill should become law. Not only will northern Ontario lose in terms of representation, but the fact of the matter is, and I think the member for Timiskaming has heard this as well, many people in northern Ontario are starting to ask the question, if the government really doesn't care about us that much, if the government really doesn't think we're that important, then why do we stay so committed and what really is our relationship? In fact, the federal member for Timiskaming has made this comment himself.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time has expired. Further questions or comments?

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum?

**Acting Clerk Assistant (Ms Donna Bryce):** Speaker, a quorum is not present.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Acting Clerk Assistant:** Speaker, a quorum is now present.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments?  
*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Take your seat for a moment until people get seated. Member for Mississauga South, go ahead.

**Mrs Marland:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the honour of the member for Algoma, who pointed out that there was an agreement that no quorum would be called this evening. I say to the member for Algoma, thank you for pointing out the agreement between all parties.

I just have difficulty when these members in the opposition think that this legislation has no value to the people of Ontario in terms of the economy of scale when we're talking about saving \$11 million. There is a tremendous amount that can be done with \$11 million and I don't want to hear the response. I say with respect to the member for Timiskaming that, oh, yes, the \$11 million can go to the tax rebate to our friends.

If you read what the Minister of Finance reported to this chamber last Thursday, you will know that because of the tax rebate, we are now in an economic recovery. That tax rebate is contributing to jobs, employment in all sectors in this province, more people employed, more people having money to spend, which in itself creates more jobs. The more people who are working, the more taxes are paid, whether it's income tax, sales tax, any other forms of tax, depending on the product that those people buy.



I simply say to you, I'm amazed that you can brush aside \$11 million, which is the saving of this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Conway:** I want to commend my colleague the member for Timiskaming for a good speech, and particularly for one with a northern perspective. As someone who represents a large rural constituency in eastern Ontario, I can just begin to imagine what it must be like to represent the large rural ridings in northern Ontario, and I'm now not talking about the current constituencies of Cochrane South or Sault Ste Marie, which are in the main urban northern Ontario constituencies.

When I think of what the member for Timiskaming has said about the testimony of the former member for Cochrane North, I remember coming here with the wonderful René Brunelle, who used to talk about living in Moonbeam and being a minister of the crown and local member.

**Mrs Marland:** Jack Pierce.

**Mr Conway:** I mean, for people who represent a nice pocket borough in south Peel, it is almost beyond the pale of their experience and imagination to conceive —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** Well, I say to the member from Brampton, it is a qualitatively different experience to be the member for Brampton South than it is to be the member from Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and East Grenville and I will not accept that there is a qualitative similarity.

**Mr Clement:** We've got 125,000 people in my riding.

**Mr Conway:** I don't care whether you've got 500,000 people; I am telling you —

**Mr Clement:** I know you don't care.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please, member for Brampton South.

**Mr Conway:** — that they are good people, they're important people, but as Harry Danford would tell you, there is a different expectation and, if nothing else, the tyranny of distance that our friend from Moose Creek or, God forbid, somebody from Moonbeam —

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** What do you mean "a tyranny?"

**Mr Conway:** It is a tyranny of distance. I want to make the point that the former federal member from Timiskaming went to his grave running the roads of that federal riding, Bruce Lonsdale. I think of André Fortin, who killed himself in Quebec running around one of the big rural constituencies of Lotbinière, not necessarily a function of —

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Member for Timiskaming, you can sum up.

**Mr Ramsay:** I'd like to thank the member for Rainy River for his comments on my speech and the member for Renfrew North for the same. I'd like to address some of the comments, though, that the member for Mississauga South had addressed. I wish she had listened to my speech, because I'd said to her that I wasn't against redistribution, and I wasn't even against the concept of fewer politicians, because I think all of us in this age have to pull our weight when it comes to this.

2150

The main argument I was making was not worrying about saving money — I think we need to save money,

and I agree with that also — but that I wanted a made-in-Ontario solution to this particular situation. I don't consider it to be a problem, but it's a situation, and I think we have to do our part and pull our own weight. All I was asking is that we would look at it through an Ontario-designed commission, based on Ontario criteria for how we would want to see the people of Ontario represented in their Legislature in Toronto.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Ramsay:** Margaret, you should be paying attention to the substance of this issue, because representation for this Parliament is right. I must say to the member for Mississauga South that I never said their full motivation for this cut was to pay for their tax cut. I never said that. But now that the member has reminded me, I think that is probably just the case, because this government is forgoing \$5 billion a year and \$11 million would be a great contribution towards that.

It's another cut, though in this case it will be a very popular cut with the majority of people of Ontario. But the people of the north, as I pointed to the member for Peterborough, did not vote for any government member north of the French River, and I think it was primarily because they understood that if the Mike Harris government ever came into being, they would lose a say in their Parliament at Queen's Park.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, member for Timiskaming.

I apologize. The night is late, and I missed the NDP in rotation for the last comment, okay?

**Mr Conway:** That can sometimes happen in daytime.

**The Acting Speaker:** On that note, further debate?

**Mr Marchese:** I have been part of the hearings on Bill 81. I was in Ottawa and we had the pleasure of listening to many deputants. I have to tell you, I've been against Bill 81 from the very beginning, and I remain convinced to the very end that this is a loony bill that should not be supported.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Oh, Rosario.

**Mr Marchese:** I will comment on what M. Villeneuve had to say in the past and what he may or may not have said in the present about what he said then. I'll have a few moments to talk about that in due time.

**Mr Bradley:** Please tell us.

**Mr Marchese:** I will do that. This bill, called the Fewer Politicians Act, should more appropriately be called the Fewer NDP and Liberal MPPs Act or should be called the More Conservative MPPs Act, or even more appropriately, the How Do We Get Ourselves, Conservative Party, Re-elected Act. That's what this bill is all about under the guise of how we cut government fat or how we cut MPPs.

What this bill does and how the Conservative Party has configured all of this is to find a way to get themselves re-elected. That's what this bill is all about. Conveniently, they talk about how in the process of doing that we're going to save \$11 million. It is fascinating how all of that fits in the grand scheme of this Conservative re-election act. By and large, the members that will be lost in the north and in the south will be members of the NDP and Liberals, where they will be competing with each other, and the Tories will smugly and neatly just move in and



get re-elected and will be able to, in the end, cause greater damage if they get re-elected to this province than they are already committing at the moment.

This act should be seen for what it is, how to get Conservative MPPs re-elected.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Rosario, you're wrong again.

**Mr Marchese:** M. Villeneuve says I'm wrong again, but I will comment on his own commentary on this in the past and see how it all fits into this grand scheme of things.

**Mr Conway:** I like the continental French, Rosario. It's a marvellous flair.

**Mr Marchese:** The French, yes: M. Villeneuve.

This bill is flawed. That is why we had nothing to introduce by way of amendments in committee. We had nothing to add or to amend because it is fundamentally flawed. Nothing we could say or introduce by way of amendments could make this a better bill, and why even attempt to try to make it better when it is fundamentally a bad bill in the first place? When they say, "The third party had no amendments," it's not because we are happy about what they have done; it's because we are completely dissatisfied with the intent of this particular bill.

This bill is a break from tradition. Since 1962, when we've had to deal with reconstituting the boundaries and/or representation of this province, we've had commissions appointed to do that job, and they were appointed for a purpose: so they could be an arm's-length group of people — neutral, hopefully; not always, but hopefully they would be neutral — to advise the government of the day, whatever the government in power, on how to redistribute or whether we should have more members or fewer members. I thought that was a good process. I remain convinced that that is a good process because it removes it from political interference, political involvement.

What has Mike Harris, the Premier of Ontario, done for the very first time? He's broken that tradition, he has broken away from something that I found to be a useful process. He has decided, because Mike Harris is omnipotent and omniscient, that he no longer needs an advisory body to tell him how and what to do, that he can do it himself. Why? Because M. le Premier is omnipotent and omniscient. He needs no advice any longer. He can do it on his own. That's what Mikey is doing. He's decided to take it upon himself politically, to show leadership and to cut away 27 politicians. He doesn't need advice. He doesn't need a referendum. He doesn't need to consult. He doesn't need to talk to people. Mike Harris has decided that this is what is good for Ontario, and thus we have Bill 81.

Is this the way that the people of Ontario want to be led? I don't think so. Do people want to participate on major issues of this kind? I think they do. They don't want to be shut out in the same way that the cities of Toronto, North York, Etobicoke, Scarborough and East York are being shut out right now, where the backroom boys and the hirelings and the hired guns are doing the dirty job for the Premier — in the back room doing the dirty work for the Premier.

They don't want to be led that way. They want to participate. They want hearings on most major changes,

and this is a major change. Mike Harris has decided to break away from that tradition. He has decided to tell you what is good for you. So all of a sudden we have 27 politicians who have gone. Why? Because Mike says, "This is good for you."

And what does M. Villeneuve have to say about this, the member from the united counties and East Grenville, what does he have to say? Has anybody heard M. Villeneuve speak on this matter? I heard him; a long time ago I heard him speak on this matter. Many years ago he had a private member's bill where he indicated that it was important not to forget the rural communities, not to forget northern Ontario, reminded us that this province is unique, that we mustn't forget how diverse, how vast this province is. He wanted the government of the day to be reminded about that diversity, that uniqueness, of rural Ontario and northern Ontario.

He urged us in his private member's bill, don't cut back on the representation for rural communities. M. Villeneuve is indicating with his thumbs up, "You're quite correct, Mr Marchese." That's what he's indicating to me right now. What happened, Monsieur Villeneuve? What happened between then and now? You as the minister, you and your friends, Ernie Eves and others who held similar views and supported you then, what happened? Would you say times have changed? Is that it? Times haven't changed? Oh, they have changed dramatically in this province with the leadership of M. Harris and this gang of Reform-minded politicians. Things have changed a great deal and they will continue to change, terminably. In fact, what they will do unto this province will be irretrievably lost. It is irretrievable, and no matter who gets elected, whether they be NDPers or Liberals, we will not be able to repair the damage that this government is exerting on the people of Ontario.

2200

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Oh, Rosario, my heart aches.

**Mr Marchese:** But, Monsieur Villeneuve, we need to hear from him, and I'm glad this Conservative member is on this side because he shares my views. I have no doubt he shares — he's disappearing all of a sudden. He's disappearing. You see how quickly they change their views. They come and they go. They come and they go like the views of M. Villeneuve. They came and they left. What was good many years ago is no longer good. Things have changed, although he says nothing has changed. But how could they not? How could you at one point say: "Don't change things for us in rural Ontario. We need the representation we have and it must continue"? How could that be? I want to hear from you, Monsieur Villeneuve. I need to know where you stand. I need to know where you and M. Ernie Eves and the others stand. It's important for your community to know.

Il est très important pour la communauté de savoir votre position et la position de M. Ernie Eves. C'est très important pour moi et pour tout le monde de savoir, parce que vous avez dit il y a longtemps que c'était important. En ce moment, ce n'est plus important? Ça reste toujours important. Je veux savoir de M. Villeneuve son opinion aujourd'hui de ce qu'il avait dit il y a



longtemps et pourquoi son opinion a changé aujourd'hui. Pourquoi ? Expliquez-vous, Monsieur Villeneuve.

**L'hon. M. Villeneuve :** Jamais.

**M. Marchese :** «Jamais», dit-il. «Jamais.»

**M. Beaubien :** Son opinion n'a pas changé.

**Mr Marchese :** Son opinion a changé. Il dit, «Jamais». Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire, «jamais» ? Son opinion a changé, et c'est important pour lui et pour ses amis de s'expliquer sur le sujet. Je veux le savoir. C'est important pour les électeurs qu'il représente de savoir sa position aujourd'hui, parce que je pense qu'ils ne la connaissent.

**Mr Baird :** Let's have a vote and he'll get up and show you.

**Mr Marchese :** No. We don't need his vote now. We need to understand his position today vis-à-vis yesterday. I remember M. Chris Stockwell, when he was here, saying: "No, it's not important what I think. It's important what you think and what you said."

Moving on, because we've had enough of that and M. Villeneuve and his position, he has been effectively muzzled by the Premier. The Premier has said: "Boys, this is what we're going to do. We are going to introduce Bill 81. We're going to cut 27 politicians. Monsieur Villeneuve, it is irrelevant what you said in the past. Monsieur Eves, it is irrelevant what you said and what you supported in the past. What is important is what we do now."

So the boys there have a problem now. They have to deal with the past. They don't quite know how to do it except to stay silent, because that is probably their best defence. Silence is their best defence because should they try to explain themselves out of that position, it'll be awfully confusing to the public. I don't think they would understand it.

So, Mike Harris has said: "Boys, forget that. You go back to your ridings and you defend Bill 81. You go tell them that what we need is fewer politicians, that government is too fat." That's what they say: "The government is too fat, too many politicians. Let us cut them out. So, you go and defend them, and you tell them at the end of the day they're going to save \$11 million." They're going to save \$11 million; 27 politicians gone.

The north is going to have fewer people to represent it. The north, which has bigger ridings than some countries in Europe, is going to have to represent that same area but a larger area all of a sudden. In those cold winters up there in the north, imagine people having to travel from one place to the other, on sleighs perhaps, I'm not sure; in cars, I'm not sure; on planes, I don't know. How are they going to go and see that member, travelling great distances, bigger than most countries in Europe? They say: "I think we can do a better job. I think that we can do a more effective job by doing it a little more effectively." That's what they say. "I think we can do a more effective job. We just have to learn to do it better." It is farcical, as laughable as this bill.

**Mrs Marland :** No, it's your acting.

**Mr Marchese :** No, it's not my acting; it is your bill that is farcical and laughable, because I tell you this: The people of northern Ontario are not laughing as joyously as you are about this, because they know they're losing something out of this. You may be pleasing your Reform-

minded constituents who say, "Less politicians, God bless; the fewer the better." You will be pleasing some of your constituents who are Reform-minded, as yourselves, but by and large the majority of the populace in Ontario is not Reform-minded, is not reform in their culture, and they will oppose it because they know that this does not serve them. They will have less accountability, less accessibility to their members, and they know that. For all your acting about, "Oh, I think the members can do a little more effective job, they just have to do it a little better," it's not going to work. It's just not going to work.

So, \$11 million in savings, and they say that with pride. One of the members says: "Oh, imagine what you could do with \$11 million. You could put it back into the educational system." Do you believe that? That's what he said. They have an income tax cut that will take \$5 billion away every year, and then they say, "Oh, but with this \$11 million we're going to put it back into the educational system."

**Mr Stewart :** Are you indicating I'm a liar?

**Mr Marchese :** They are going to cut approximately, I wager this, \$2 billion from the educational system. Then they have the gall to say, "Imagine what we can do with \$11 million; we can bring it right back to the educational system," while at the same time taking \$2 billion away, because that's what they will take.

They say \$1 billion is going to be taken from the educational system, although they will not admit that, but they will take \$2 billion away. I estimate \$500 million will be taken away from preparation time; not \$1 billion but half a billion. They will take away from teachers' salaries who knows how much. In terms of taking away from the commercial and industrial base from major cities in Metro, Ottawa and other places, approximately another \$1 billion. They will take \$2 billion away from the educational system. Then this member and others have the courage to say, "Oh, but with \$11 million just imagine what we could do with that."

They have the gall to give away billions to bankers, bankers who earn \$1.5 million, \$1.6 million and some of them \$1.9 million for cutting away staff, even as a bonus, and they will get \$120,000 or \$130,000 at the end of that 30% cut; to benefit them. Then this member and others say, "Imagine what we could do with \$11 million."

2210

Throwing \$5 billion away every year into this bottomless, Tory, wealthy sieve that's going to go to their friends, a bottomless sieve, received by wealthy people whose money is never going to come back into the economy, stealing from the poor of this province to give to their wealthy bankers, and then they argue, "Imagine what we could do with \$11 million"? If it weren't so farcical, I'd laugh right now. But it's not a laughable matter.

They add other arguments to this. They say: "Oh, but people are confused between federal and provincial ridings. We're going to make it easier for them, because those poor folk out there sometimes cannot distinguish between a federal and provincial riding. So, we're going to make it easier for them."



**Mr Wildman:** You don't have enough confidence in the voters.

**Mr Marchese:** Not only not enough confidence in the voters to understand, but they present it as an argument, as if to convince us and you, the public, that they're doing something that is intelligent. Please, it has nothing to do with common sense. I want to hear from M. Villeneuve, who says we are wasting his precious time, because this loony bill is wasting my time. This loony bill is wasting the people of Ontario's time.

I urge the people of Ontario, particularly those living in the ridings where people like M. Villeneuve, Mr Eves and others who were there in his time live, to write me. I want to know what you think about where they stand. If you think I'm right today, I want you to write him and the Premier, in a letter marked "Private and confidential" so that it gets directly in his hands, so that he will know exactly what you think.

Why do I say this? I say this because if you write a letter to this minister or the Premier and it is not marked "Private and confidential," it will go through the civil service, and by the time the Premier or the minister gets it, they're out of office. Don't send it to the minister without writing on that envelope "Private and confidential." It is urgent that people write to them now, today, on an envelope marked "Private and confidential," so they know your views today, not three years from now when they open that envelope up, but now.

If you are watching this program tonight at this very moment, I urge you to write me or them, "Private and confidential," so that they are the only ones who get to open up that envelope and with their own eyes see what you have to tell them. Do it now. Do it today. Don't wait three years from now, because it will be too late. They need to know.

**Mr Gerretsen:** You sound like a television preacher.

**Mr Marchese:** Thank you, John. I have a fan to my right.

This is what this bill is all about. Because of the income tax cut, they have introduced many loony bills in this House. Because of this income tax cut, they are alienating half of the population, at least, in Ontario, and they will alienate the other half in the next year when they continue to introduce many more loony bills of this sort.

This Fewer Politicians Act, I remind you, should be called How Do We Get Ourselves, Tory Caucus Party, Re-elected? In the same way that I talk about this, I remind you about so many other bills they've introduced where, in their own title, they — I was about to use words that are not acceptable in the House; I'm desperately searching for an appropriate one. Their titles do not speak the truth. It's like the tenant protection package, which leads people to believe that's all about tenants. It has nothing to do with tenants. It is all to do with an attack on tenants. It is all to do with the landlord protection act. Every one of these bills that they present in the House must be seen through a filter that allows people to see the politics behind what they are doing.

The politics behind all this is to please a Reform-minded public that doesn't mind getting rid of 27 politicians, that doesn't mind at all, but I tell you that as you

do this you diminish your own role, not just mine but your own role as politicians, and without realizing it we have all been diminished because you've created the impression for the public that we don't need those 27 politicians, that we can do without them. You have created the impression that you are useless politicians here. I almost ask myself, and you should ask yourselves, why are you doing this? Why are you here as politicians if you didn't believe in your function? Did you get yourselves elected so you could cut more politicians? Is that your role as a politician?

I don't think that should be your role. I don't think you meant to be elected to get rid of your own jobs. I don't think you got elected to reduce your own credibility here. I am worried about this because I know that the politicians who will be elected to this House in the next election will have a bigger job on their hands.

They will have a more difficult time to represent their constituents. Others can say, naïvely, "Oh, we can do a more effective job with less," but those of us who work hard in this place know it's very difficult to be able to do a lot more than what we're doing, when constituents come to me in my office worried about their compensation claim, worried about being injured and having to live with less, worried about mental illness and not having the services in their community to deal with that problem, nervous and worried about having fewer and fewer advocates to protect them and help them out, worried about the educational cuts, and I know, having recently had a press conference in my office and people picketing my office, picketing against this government, worried about what those educational cuts will mean to them.

I worry that we will not have the energy to be able to do more, and my staff is a very able, very educated staff and they work very hard. What some of these members are asking my staff to do is to work more than they're already now working, to do the job of representing those constituencies that they have put aside, that they don't give a damn about. They're going to have a difficult time, those members.

I worry about rural communities being represented adequately and I'm worried about northern MPPs being able to do their job effectively. How they could not worry about those constituents is beyond me. I'm also thinking, is it because they elect fewer Conservative members in the north that they seem to care less about the north consequently? Sometimes I really believe that is the motivation behind Bill 81. We are going to have fewer politicians, but it won't be Conservative members that get elected in the north; they're either NDP members or Liberal members. So in my mind, I say, "They probably don't care that those individuals will have to do a hell of a lot more to be able to adequately represent those members because they won't have to be there to worry about that."

This is a flawed bill. This is a loony bill. This is a bill that those members that I have referred to need to speak to. I urge the public to either write to me about what they have said or write to them.

2220

**Mr Bradley:** I'll write to you.

**Mr Marchese:** No, I don't want Liberal friends to write to me. I want the constituents of the united counties



of East Grenville and others to write to me, but more particularly to write to them and send me a copy so that I know what you're thinking. We urge you to do that, because if you are silent, this government will assume that it is doing the right thing. If you remain passive, this government will trample all over you. This Premier and this government are very, very happy not to consult you on many things, and they call that leadership. They call it leadership to be able to do things without hearing from you and without consulting you. Some have informed me that in order to understand this government, we need to read a few Soviet writers because that will give us a glimpse of the style of governance of this government.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Do you think that's far-fetched? I think not. Because the way this government is behaving, the way that it does things in its own draconian way with the iron fist, is clearly reminiscent of many other countries that people link you to. It may be that you don't worry about this, but I tell you this: In six more months, many of you will have a lot to worry about. Write to them on this bill and let them know what you think.

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** I'm pleased to speak on the member for Fort York's comments and his speech, I guess both in French and English, and thank him for his impersonation of John Wayne, I think that was? It was John Wayne.

He speaks of talking to constituents. I want to tell him about the constituents of Scarborough Centre and what they have to say about Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act. A couple of weeks ago I held a town hall meeting in my riding on this specific issue of redistribution and how it affects the constituents of Scarborough Centre.

**Mr Wildman:** There was just one fewer politician they want.

**Mr Newman:** They do, but it's not me, Mr Wildman. At that meeting, which was largely advertised, 140 residents of my riding came out to listen to the chief election officer for Ontario, Mr Warren Bailie, plus the local returning officer, Barry Davidson, to hear what they had to say about it. What came out of the meeting was that they just wanted to be communicated with, and I was doing that. They felt the federal government hadn't done a good job of communicating with them how the federal boundaries had changed, and they wanted a permanent voters list.

**Mr Bradley:** Where was this meeting?

**Mr Newman:** The meeting was in Anson Park Public School, Mr Bradley.

The member talks about having the bill called the "Fewer NDP and Liberal Members" bill. Perhaps that may happen, but that won't be because of this bill; that will be because of the record of this government, that we're a government of integrity and a government that sticks to its word. I wonder if the member's comments about the ridings being redistributed had anything to do with what he had to say tonight.

The member mentioned the role of politicians being diminished because of Bill 81. I suggest to him that it was him and his NDP cohorts and their outrageous record of spending and tax hikes that left the public with the impression, and not this government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time has expired. The member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**M<sup>me</sup> Pupatello:** J'ai deux choses à dire ce soir : la première, que je suis d'accord avec notre collègue de North York dans son discours.

**M. Villeneuve:** Sandra, c'est vrai ?

**M<sup>me</sup> Pupatello:** Oui, et je suis très heureuse aussi que notre ministre des Affaires francophones et des Affaires rurales soit ici dans la Chambre. Il veut entrer dans le débat ce soir sur le sujet de la circonscription et des changements que le gouvernement fait aujourd'hui.

Je veux dire aussi que je suis très heureuse que vous soyez ici, Monsieur le Ministre, parce que vous êtes le même ministre qui a dit une chose avant l'élection mais aujourd'hui vous avez fait quelque chose de totalement différent. Vous avez changé complètement votre chanson, et aujourd'hui vous chantez une autre chanson.

Par exemple, dans les affaires touchant l'agriculture, vous avez dit que vous aviez un grand support pour les programmes agricoles, mais aujourd'hui, au lieu, vous avez coupé 83 million de dollars dans les programmes d'agriculture. C'est vrai, Monsieur le Président. C'est le même ministre qui a dit à tous les députés dans l'agriculture qu'ils donnent un grand support, et pour les zones rurales vous avez dit la même chose, que vous donnez un grand support. Mais aujourd'hui, vous avez coupé les députés pour les zones rurales. Je ne suis pas d'accord.

That was quite an exhaustive task I just went through. In any event, what I must say at the end of it all and I must repeat again is that the Premier's office in Ontario has increased his budget from some \$1.7 million to some \$2.6 million at the same time he chooses to cut the elected officials in Ontario.

**Mr Wildman:** I just wanted to congratulate my friend from Fort York on his presentation. It was very entertaining as well as informative. I think it's significant that he was able to point out that the member for the united counties, who is now the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, M. Villeneuve, was very much an advocate for rural Ontario at one time, and despite the fact that he is now the minister responsible for rural affairs, he seems to have forgotten his loyalty to rural residents and to their need to be properly represented in this assembly.

I think it's significant too that the member for Scarborough Centre got up and said that he had a meeting in his riding and 140 people came. I was just wondering: Was this meeting sponsored by the member? The chief election officer, Warren Bailie, came to this meeting. I am a little concerned about this, to say the least, that somehow the chief election officer would be pulled into a partisan meeting to talk about what is good about this bill that is being presented by the government. Surely it is the responsibility of the chief election officer to remain aloof from partisan politics and from controversy about a bill that is before the House, a bill which is very controversial and which has many, many people in the province concerned. To have a servant of the electorate, a public servant who is supposed to be above politics, involved in such a meeting I think is most inappropriate.

**Mrs Marland:** I think in fairness it's important to put on the record that the meeting to which the member for



Scarborough Centre was referring was a public town hall meeting. It was not a partisan meeting. He sponsored the meeting as the local MPP, and there's quite a difference. It was not a partisan meeting.

Because I wish to comment on the comments made by the member for Fort York, having been elected at the same time as the member for Fort York and both of us having been here now almost 12 years, I would say to that member that I have never seen you more in full flight than this evening. I think that for the Academy Awards I certainly would nominate you for first place. You and I were at the same performance of a play last weekend, and I see now your interest in acting, because your impersonation of various characters during your debate tonight, while entertaining, really doesn't deal with the substance of the bill. The substance of the bill is that this province is going to save \$11 million.

The other part of this, of course, is that when we talk about democratic rights, we have 82 seats on this side of the House because we told the public of Ontario 12 months before the election that we were going to reduce the number of members in this House. We are simply fulfilling on a platform that we published in print 12 months before the election. We are fulfilling that promise and the commitment, and on that basis we were elected 82 seats in Ontario, with everyone knowing exactly what we were going to do.

2230

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Fort York.

**Mr Marchese:** I thank the members from Scarborough Centre, Windsor-Sandwich, Algoma and Mississauga South for their comments. First, they're quite proud to say, "The federal government has already done this work of the redistribution, so we are conveniently and neatly following in their footsteps." I think it's wrong. The provincial government should take care of its own needs and not say, "The federal government has already done this and we will follow in their footsteps." It's a fundamental mistake. We have our own needs in Ontario we should be worried about and not try to fit into the needs of the federal government in this regard.

Second, this shifts power from MPPs to the Premier's office even more. Power settles snugly in the Premier's office at the moment and it will continue to reside there even more so in the future when the 27 members disappear from this House, because, rest assured, this bill will pass.

Third, if I am a good actor, they are much better actors than I. If they will have convinced you at the end of the day that this is good for you, they will have acted their play much more effectively than me. It remains to be seen whether I am a good actor or whether they have been good actors, and which of us is better at that.

Finally, the income tax cut is making this government do the looniest of things and this bill fits into that loony plan. There is no vision here. Once you've made the lunatic mistake of the income tax cut, everything falls stupidly behind it. This is the wrong bill. We should be defeating it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Durham East.

*Applause.*

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** Thank you. Thank you, my fellow Canadians.

It's certainly a pleasure to participate in this debate on Bill 81 tonight in the late sitting. I really want to be a little more focused than the debate I've heard so far. With all respect to those beleaguered viewers who may be watching tonight, out of respect for them, I know they have heard all the rhetoric and all the various party lines up to this point, so I'll try to stick to the very subject at hand: Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterpart and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation.

The Honourable Dave Johnson introduced this bill on October 1, 1996, and since that time members have been expected to go about and consult and learn about the various aspects of this bill. I've done that and my friend from Scarborough Centre has done that. I believe a lot of members have consulted. I've heard very little from my constituents about concerns.

**Mr Conway:** That's not what the Port Perry Star tells us.

*Interjection.*

**Mr O'Toole:** No, no, Durham East is a very loyal riding, and you know that, Mr Conway.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Renfrew North and the member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**Mr O'Toole:** Exactly. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

As the member from Mississauga mentioned earlier, we were committed, during the election process, to fewer politicians. In fact, we committed to 99 members, which is the current number of federal members. So this is not new, it's not something the electorate didn't know and didn't vote for. They voted knowing full well —

**Mr Wildman:** They didn't vote for it in northern Ontario.

**Mr O'Toole:** Of course they did.

What we've done is that we've respected the hard work that's been done by the federal electoral commission and we're going with 103 members, which is in line with the federal boundaries. There are a lot of efficiencies there for all the people of Ontario. In terms of all the factors Mr Gilchrist spoke of earlier this afternoon, which are on the record, the work has been done to reflect the demographics: The rural aspects, the urban aspects and the geographical considerations have all been well discussed within this debate in the House today.

I think our constituents should first know that the bill will come into effect — there will be a transition period, but for future elections in this province this act will prevail.

There are a couple of other interesting parts that I thought the viewers might be interested in. The first one is section 3, which may affect just those riding associations that may be watching tonight.

"(3) After the proclamation date, the commission shall register new constituency associations in the register mentioned in subsection 11(2).

"(4) The commission shall register a new constituency association only if its application complies with subsection 11(2)...."



There are 27 fewer ridings, so many of these riding associations have to be collapsed, and when they're collapsed, their coterminous ridings will assume some of their assets or liabilities, and also the new representative will be their elected representative.

It's very important that the riding associations, those people who are members of whatever party in this province, Liberal or, heaven forbid, the NDP, and in fact our party — of course we're the party that is working towards that organizational thing of always looking to the electorate and doing what they want us to do. They voted us in. Smaller government: That's what people want, and I'm convinced it's the right move.

You have to recognize that the government should lead by example. As we listen to the Sweeney report on education and we listen to the Crombie report on Who Does What, all those particular reports are talking about smaller government, smaller administration. Why wouldn't the government take upon itself a lead role, showing by example?

I always like to bring into the record the history of the debate during the election. I'm holding up a very famous book —

**Mr Wildman:** Quit living in the past.

**Mr O'Toole:** It's not the past. Of course, it would have to have Mr Kennedy's picture on here now.

**Interjection:** Mr McGuinty's.

**Mr O'Toole:** No. Gee, they almost had it printed. Yes, it's Mr McGuinty now. That's right. Pardon me.

**Mr Baird:** Mr McGuinty said he was proud of it.

**Mr O'Toole:** Yes, he was, actually. I'm going to bring to mind a few things. There's a little section here referred to as "Smaller Government Starts at the Top." I found that particular section very interesting. I'm sure Mr Bradley, the member for St Catharines, would be interested in listening to this.

"Everyone agrees that government must become smaller and more efficient." I think that's appropriate. They seem to espouse that mode and I would like to support that. We're basically trying to respond to the people of Ontario through most of the legislation we're doing.

"But under the current NDP government, the number of political staff and spending on questionable advertising campaigns have both increased dramatically." They said it; I'm just reading it. And it's true, because the people were disgusted, upset, threw you out of office. That's history now, but you can learn from history or you're doomed to repeat it.

"A Liberal government will show leadership in getting government spending under control by: cutting the number of political staff." Notice that? They're cutting the staff, not themselves. We're starting with ourselves. How do the members, when they're in the House here till midnight, help their constituents? The staff are probably as important as the members themselves. They were going to start by cutting the staff. That's almost like political patronage. Well, it's clear they weren't elected, so this didn't make any sense anyway.

"Reducing government advertising by \$10 million." I could go on, but there are a couple of other things. I think they made some very good points. Much of it was copied. Scrap the MPPs' pensions? We've done it. The

only difference between us and them is that we've done it. We promised to do this and we're going to do this.

2240

**Mr Bradley:** Oh, I wish I could speak on this.

**Mr O'Toole:** You'll get a chance, Mr Bradley from St Catharines. I'm very interested in what you might have to say.

*Interjections.*

**Mr O'Toole:** The argument I've been trying to make — under great challenge and anxiety, I've been trying to make the argument that many of my constituents call me and the first thing our staff is supposed to do is try to help them. That's the very first thing: try to help them. I believe every member in this House is there to serve. When they call, they really don't know if the responsibility lies with the provincial member or the federal member. In fact, they don't know if it's the regional councillor who has that responsibility. When I looked over some of the divisions of responsibility between the federal level and the provincial level, I think it's important to help the people of Ontario understand that the division of responsibility is covered by the constitutional issues. It's very important.

People know that health care is primarily a provincial jurisdiction, but of course it comes under the Canada Health Act. Education is primarily a provincial jurisdiction, but again it's regulated by transfer payments, especially when it comes to education of new Canadians and retraining the workforce, those people after post-secondary, I suspect. If you look at the ministries we have and the fewer ministers we have, by the way, fewer ministers or ministries than have been around in this province for many years, and then you look at the federal level, what are the main responsibilities for the federal level of government? The federal level of government is basically involved with —

*Interjections.*

**Mr O'Toole:** I'm having a lot of trouble here.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I would like to note that the member for Scarborough East is out of order. You can't wear that shirt in the Legislature. But since you're in the visitors' gallery, welcome.

**Mr Bradley:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm just wondering if that shirt is a shirt from the Cobourg city council.

**The Speaker:** I believe that's not a point of order.

**Mr O'Toole:** I'd also like to extend my welcome to the member for Scarborough-Canadian Tire. I was being rudely interrupted, I have to admit, and I thank the Speaker for bringing us all back to focus. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

I was trying to outline the differences in responsibility between the federal level of government and the provincial level of government for those people viewing. Foreign affairs and international issues of course are federal, clearly, but very few constituents call, whether it's a federal MP or an MPP, about a foreign issue. If they call about a passport, of course we help them. If they call about a birth certificate, of course we help them. I'm not certain —

**Mrs Pupatello:** I don't think you're helping anybody.



**Mr O'Toole:** Yes, we are. I'd have to differ with the member.

When I look at the other ministries, though, ministries of finance, certainly there's a great deal of cooperation between those two levels, the federal and provincial.

*Interjections.*

**Mr O'Toole:** Mr Speaker, they just don't get it. They don't know anything about smaller. They only know bigger and more money. That's the only thing they know.

Again, when you look at the justice system, there is a responsibility for the justice system federally and provincially. Offences less two years generally are provincial in nature and over that is federal.

There's a great deal of cooperation between both levels of government. It's about time we realized there should be more cooperation between the province and the federal government. "Harmonization" is a big word. It's being flaunted around by the federal party. But when I look at other ministries, like environment and labour, why are there two sets of standards, federal and provincial? Why doesn't the federal Liberal government get on board and start to streamline some of the responsibilities and not make everything so political? Why have we got two sets of environmental standards, labour standards, all sorts of issues that make it look complicated for not only the citizens but indeed the businesses of this country, which are foundering over mountains of overregulation and overgovernment and overrestrictive practices?

I was reading an article recently, and I don't have it with me but I will make reference to it, and that is an article comparing Ontario to California, only in population and representation, no other politics involved. Ontario and California are pretty similar in population, but in GDP or the gross value of their economy they're about 13 times larger.

**Mr Wildman:** No, they aren't. California is twice the population of Ontario.

**Mr O'Toole:** A hundred times larger. Mr Speaker, could you help me with this?

**Mr Wildman:** California is twice as large.

**Mr O'Toole:** They're much larger. How's that?

When you look at the representation, in Ontario we have more representation than California, federal and provincial. We have more members, with our federal and provincial members, than the whole state of California. Their economy could support 10 times the amount of representation.

You look at the Senate —

**Mr Wildman:** Why is this relevant?

**Mr O'Toole:** I think it's relevant to say, are we too overrepresented in Canada? That's the question.

**Mr Wildman:** Why don't you compare it to PEI?

**Mr O'Toole:** PEI is certainly overrepresented in terms of the federal picture, but that's a constitutional issue.

**Mr Wildman:** How about Alberta?

**Mr Conway:** John, how many are in the California state Legislature?

**The Speaker:** Order, order. First, the member for Durham East, it's best if you direct your comments through the Chair.

**Mr Conway:** I'm going to the library. I'll be back.

**The Speaker:** The member for Renfrew North and the member for Algoma, this is a one-way debate and it goes this way to that. If you want to respond, you can.

**Mr O'Toole:** I know it's late in the evening. I know a lot of people get very cranky, crotchety, and don't pay very good attention. The point I was trying to make is, if you look at the size of government, the comparison to some 595 representing the whole United States, in Canada we have almost as many but about 20% of the population. That's the difference. We're overrepresented at all levels.

I was reading just recently, as part of the David Crombie report, *Who Does What*, that just in Toronto, for instance, we have 104 school trustees. Imagine that. We only have 130 MPPs for the province. That's just the school trustees. If you add in the local governments and the Metro council, the commissioners, the trustees, there are almost 200-and-some elected politicians in Toronto alone. Don't you get it? We're overrepresented, overgoverned.

**Mr Wildman:** Why don't you get rid of them all and appoint one dictator?

**Mr O'Toole:** You're misleading, and that's exactly your strategy, to overreact without thinking. Our plan has been very well thought out, independently of our politics. In fact, we're inheriting the federal boundaries. We're going to have a common electoral list, and it's going to be a useful exercise for the people of Ontario. We're accountable to the people of Ontario. We seem to forget that.

I believe if the federal government was serious about the argument today, they would really look at trying to harmonize some of the issues around the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Environment and Energy, justice, a whole series of issues that could save this province and this country a lot of waste and duplication. Who's paying for it? There's one taxpayer. I can't believe your inattention to this bill and this deliberate attempt to mislead the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker:** Member for Durham East, that is out of order. You must withdraw that.

**Mr O'Toole:** I withdraw that comment. It's not a deliberate attempt. I suspect they're not really responding, in my view, to what our approach is: less government, more effective and more accountable government.

**Mr Bradley:** I want to comment because I was waiting for the member to mention the fact that the Niagara Peninsula is losing two seats under this, and with all the hospitals you're coming in to close, we'll need as many members as possible to fight that. I know my colleagues the member for Niagara Falls, the member for St Catharines-Brock, the member for Lincoln, the member for Niagara South, all of these members, including myself, will want to fight the hospital closures. If you don't have sufficient clout to do so and numerous voices in this, it's difficult to be able to prevent those closures, closures which I recall no Conservative candidate mentioning in the last election.

2250

Secondly, we need those members as well to ensure that the worker adviser office in Thorold isn't closed, because it serves the entire Niagara Peninsula and



provides service to those who have problems with the Workers' Compensation Board but do not have a union with sufficient resources to be able to represent them. Local 119, for instance, in our area has the expertise and the resources to do so, but many people, if they're not organized by a union or are represented by a smaller union, really require the service of this office. We need the members we have in the peninsula now to fight for an appropriate number of people in the labour office to handle the employment standards problems and other problems brought to our attention by both employees and employers.

So when you see all of these issues coming forward, we in the Niagara Peninsula require that kind of service because I know all of my colleagues will want to be doing all of those things that I just mentioned. They'll be right there fighting the closing of those hospitals and fighting the closing of the worker adviser office.

**Mr Wildman:** I think it's interesting in listening to the comments of the member opposite that he does what many of his colleagues seem to do and that is to confuse the term "government" with the assembly. Obviously, the government, both the executive and the elected representatives, are here in this assembly, but the member is a member not of the government but of the party that supports the government.

I'm a member of a party that is in opposition, and we are elected here to represent the people. So by making smaller this assembly, one is not making smaller government. If the Premier wishes, and I think he has done, to make government smaller, one of the things he does is to make smaller the number of people in cabinet and to make smaller the number of bureaucrats. Apparently he hasn't been very successful at that, because while he has lowered the number of cabinet ministers somewhat and he has lowered the number of bureaucrats in the province, he has increased the political staff of his office.

Be that as it may, the point I'm trying to make is that by making smaller the assembly, one is not making government smaller; one is making the assembly smaller. They are not one and the same thing. What you are doing is making it less possible for the people of the province to have the kind of representation they've had in the past.

You may want to do that. You may say, "We don't need as many representatives." Fine. If that's your position, make that clear, but don't pretend that by making the assembly smaller you're making government smaller, because they are two different things.

**Mr Maves:** To my colleague from the Niagara region and St Catharines, I spoke earlier about the more than 250 elected politicians that we have down there right now for less than 400,000 people. With this bill, we'll lose two politicians, hardly the end of democracy.

With regard to clout, I think we've done very well, the four elected members from the Tory caucus on this side of the House from the Niagara region. The casino is going to open on Saturday night and there are 6,000 jobs coming to our region just from that alone.

The member for St Catharines-Brock has been very successful in getting some funding for the world rowing championship, for MRI machines and for a new campus for Niagara College, so I don't think clout's going to be

any problem through the next election, when the four of us are re-elected.

I want to congratulate the member for Durham East on a good speech. He talked about duplication. The members opposite have been asking all night, why don't we set up our own commission? Why would we set up our own commission to duplicate exactly what the federal commission just did, traverse the province and explain to everyone how they wanted to adjust the boundaries, a neutral commission, have public hearings which were very poorly attended, I might add? Why would we repeat that exact same process and do the exact same thing over and over again? The previous government did that. That was the kind of duplication they were into. The result of that is \$8.7 billion worth of debt interest that we have to pay next year.

Also, the member for York East talked about a conspiracy, that this bill is a conspiracy to get us re-elected. Had we hired our own hacks to go out and gerrymander the boundaries so that we would do better in the next election that might have some credence, but the fact of the matter is that we had the federal commission go out, a neutral body, to redraw the boundaries and those are the ones we are dropping. It's paranoia to suggest that this act has anything to do with our trying to gerrymander.

**Mr Conway:** I apologize for the interjection, but I have had time to go to the library to do a quick check on some of the statistical information that my friend from Port Perry presented. Unlike some others, I like him; there's something about his Irish Hibernian feistiness that is just kind of reminiscent and appealing.

In the course of his remarks he made some reference to American examples. I haven't had a chance to check the entire file, but California — I don't know, I think the current population of California is something of the order of the population of the Dominion of Canada, something like 28 to 30 million people. Their state legislature has more representation than this Legislature will have after the passage of Bill 81. According to this reference guide, *The Book of the States* — happily provided by the reference desk in the library — the information is that there are 120 members of the California state Legislature.

I was interested just looking at some of the other parallels. One of the smallest states in the American union, Vermont, which has a population one sixtieth the size of —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** Well, it was a point raised by my friend from Port Perry. Vermont has 180 state representatives for a population one sixtieth the size of California.

But maybe more to the point, when I look at the state representation in the Great Lakes Basin, places like — let's look at them: Ohio, 132 state representatives; New York, 211; Michigan, 148; Illinois, 177. When one looks at those, I think it is more appropriate, if you want to make American comparisons, to look at Ohio, at Illinois, at Michigan. Quite frankly, I think our current numbers, given the 12 or 11 million people in Ontario —

**The Speaker:** Responses? The member for Durham East.



**Mr O'Toole:** I thank the members for St Catharines, Algoma, Niagara Falls and Renfrew North. I really appreciate that the fact they responded perhaps implies they listened.

The member for St Catharines mentioned the lack of argument with respect to Niagara hospital closures. I would draw to his attention that Dr Sinclair on the hospital restructuring commission, an independent, arm's-length commission, is an eminent doctor from Queen's University medical school. I'd like him to bring his argument to Dr Sinclair's attention; that's where it should be brought.

The member for Algoma talked about the government and the assembly. It was very instructive. I appreciate your remarks. I intend to learn from them, Mr Wildman, and I mean that. You did make a subtle difference between my use of the word "government," meaning we're the government from the point of view of this side of the House, and the fact the assembly number would be diminished thereby perhaps aggrandizing the government's role, you might say, by having fewer members in the assembly. A point well made.

But the issue of accessibility isn't well made because in today's world, with the electronic era — I know the northern part of Ontario may be disadvantaged in that area, but certainly telecommunications and other media today make the job a lot different, with computers and technology. I think we have to modernize. The point has been made today. It's time we review it every 10 years.

The member for Niagara Falls I'm pleased to congratulate on the opening of the casino this weekend. That pretty well sums up his comment.

I would say I always learn from that member for Renfrew North. I have the greatest respect for him in the House, but I would disagree with his argument. California, he said — I take it his words are well researched, academic as he is — has 30 million people. Well, Ontario has about 10 million. He told us right here that they have 120 members for 30 million. We have —

**The Speaker:** The member for Durham East, thank you very much. Further debate?  
2300

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** My voice may crack from time to time as it has been strained over time this week, and of course I'm very emotional about Bill 81, so my voice may also crack at that time.

I'm pleased to speak on this bill, but I'm not so pleased to speak about the content that's in it. It's disturbing to me that we have to make comments on this bill, favourably called the Fewer Politicians Act. For me, I'm very disturbed by its contents.

It represents a weakening of the voice of rural Ontario, and that is one aspect of the bill I'm most concerned with. When I say "rural Ontario," that would also include northern Ontario, which as we all know has vast expanses of what would be commonly known as rural area. So I'm very concerned about the government's proposal to reduce the size of the Legislature from 130 seats to 103. For me, it represents a lessening of democracy for those people who live out in the areas that will be most affected.

In western Ontario, the representation will drop from 25 seats to 20. This is a 20% decrease in legislative members here at Queen's Park. In northern Ontario, representation will drop from 15 seats to 10 seats, a 33% drop in representation of members travelling here to Queen's Park to represent those people of those areas, those people in the small towns and the vast expanse that is part of our great province.

I know that many people have quoted the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I think it's one of the most remarkable quotes, made on October 17, 1985. He said, "As many of the previous speakers addressing this have mentioned, we do not want to see the rural part of Ontario further underrepresented." That was what the Minister of Agriculture said in 1985, not that long ago. "I personally feel," he went on to say, "because of the location of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and the structure and makeup of rural areas, we must retain the status quo intact. It is a situation that was addressed by a number of my colleagues and I certainly agree with them. Rural Ontario must have more, not less, representation."

That was Noble Villeneuve in 1985. But now he's caught up in this idea, perhaps brought about by his leader, Mike Harris. Mike Harris had something to say about representation of ridings and riding numbers back in December 1985. What did the now Premier say? He said: "What would happen with the new changes? It would split up some of the areas of Springer, Field and Caldwell townships and separate them from the town of Sturgeon Falls and from the town of Cache Bay and from Band 10 of the Nipissing Ojibways. I ask the commission to consider the concerns of these communities. Although the numbers may warrant this change and the proposed ridings may parallel the federal ridings, I ask whether those facts are not offset by the commonality of the communities."

Now we reach a point in time where the current government, a Conservative government, is talking about reducing the number of seats. In Canada, the question of how large the Legislature should be is seen as part of a broader question, and that question is, how should the principle of representation by population, or one person, one vote, be implemented? It's been something that here in Canada, and indeed in Ontario, we have always strived for: the view of one person, one vote.

Quite naturally, it's impossible to do that directly and literally, but we do try throughout our history to have a representative balance that comes close to this ideal.

In answer to this question, politicians have always regarded the issue of the optimum size of the Legislature as one consideration. Therefore, we don't have everyone in the province sitting in this House, but we strive for one person and one vote and we take into account, through our electoral maps which have been modified over and over as the population of Canada and indeed Ontario has grown, to reflect equal representation in light of the geographical and regional character of our many communities.

I guess that's what we're concerned about when we talk about the geographical concerns and the regional character of communities. We have been doing well, I



believe, in formulating a representation number for this House, and now we're going to see that reversed. Indeed, we're going to see a reversal of a goal that we all strive for: one person, one vote. Now we're going to back away from that ideal. We're going to back away from that ideal as driven by the Conservative government.

One of the members mentioned gerrymandering. To avoid the charges of gerrymandering that occurred way back in our history, or allegedly occurred, the gerrymandering of boundaries was eliminated by putting in place independent commissions. These commissions were formed with the membership made up of judges, legislative clerks, election officials and academics, just to name a few; people who could see the need to increase the representation of membership in legislatures, who represented the needs of the people as our population grew.

We have a system in place that can decide independently on the redistribution of seats. That redistribution is taken care of by these commissions, both in calculating the number of seats, where the seats should be and what area those seats would represent. We've had this for quite some time.

In the revolution document the government put out during their campaign, they indeed did talk about reducing the number of seats. It's right here in black and white: "We will reduce the number of MPPs, from 130 to 99, simply by using the same boundaries we use to elect federal MPs." True enough. It was in the election document and the government is arguing that the people of Ontario want this change: "We said it in the revolution document."

I really believe the people of Ontario voted for the government based on a promise of a 30% tax cut, coupled with the promise that they would not cut health care and they would not cut education; those two things, in my mind. People, as I went door to door during the campaign, believed in those two issues most wholeheartedly. I don't believe they took time to recognize that by reducing the revenues this government would take in by 30% and then promising no cuts to health care, no cuts to education, which clearly represent the larger ministries and the largest expenditures of this government — they believed it. They believed you could actually cut revenues by 30% and protect those two ministries. I believe that's why people voted for the Mike Harris government.

Now we're finding that at least on the side of maintaining the levels of health care, education, police and agriculture, the government can't do it. They can't give up 30% of revenues and maintain their commitments not to cut those areas. I believe it was those items, much more so than your promise to reduce the size of the Legislature.

2310

We have a history in this province of increasing the size of the Legislature in order to service the people, in order to represent the people, in order to bring their views here to Queen's Park.

In 1963, this Legislature increased from 98 seats to 108. It wasn't perhaps all that dramatic; 10 more seats were added in 1963.

In 1965, a commission was struck that dealt with the issues of urban and rural seats and they wanted to strike

a balance. They wanted to strike a balance in the representation as best they could between the rural and urban seats.

However, it wasn't until 1967 that the Legislature went from 108 seats to 117. The seat recommendations remained largely the same from this commission towards its implementation, but the boundary adjustments were made and there was some variance.

Then again in 1973 a redistribution commission formed by order of the House went on to increase the size of this Legislature from 117 to 125. The increase, as you notice, was never very dramatic. It may have been 10 seats and actually indeed at one time it was only eight; not a dramatic swing, not a dramatic increase, but always something that tried to strive for one person, one vote and a balance between rural and urban settings.

Now we have the reverse and we have an extreme where the government wants to reduce the size of this Legislature by 27 seats. We have never seen an increase of more than 10 seats, on average, yet we're going to decrease the size of this House dramatically.

One thing the commission recommended in 1973 — and I hope the members opposite hear this — was that during the redistribution there was a mandate made that at least 15 seats be maintained in the north. Why? They recognized the geographical difference, the commonality of communities, the vast land expanses of ridings, the need to help the people — not help the politicians, help the people — have access to an MPP in northern Ontario who would satisfy their needs, and it was mandated, notwithstanding other rules within the commission's boundary setting, that there be 15 seats. Indeed, in 1975 we did adopt 125 seats for this Legislature.

The most recent redistribution commission was formed in 1983. The minister of the day, Tom Wells, a Progressive Conservative, introduced the order in the House and it was he who said there should be a guarantee of 15 seats.

Why do we have 130 seats today? I've explained that somewhat, but the real reason is to accommodate the people of Ontario, always maintaining more seats. From 1971 to 1983 the average population per seat did border very close to about 70,000. It was 68,000, in round numbers, 70,000, 67,500. We always maintained more seats and maintained a similar average population of 67,000 people. However, a cap on the number of seats, coupled with significant growth in urban areas, creates pressures to reduce the number of rural seats. It always has, it always will and it will continue to do so.

Remember that in western Ontario the Harris plan will lose five seats. Rural Ontario already lost two rural seats in 1986 and this bill will further erode that democratic voice.

Between 1971 and 1981, the population grew by 12%, but the commission was directed to increase the Legislature's size by five seats, or only 4%. It's never always perfect, that we have that one person, one vote, but we always try to achieve it as best we can.

When the population increased by 12% but the seats in the House increased by only 4%, it was necessary to reduce the number of rural seats, and that's what we have here again. That's a brief history of the riding redistribu-



tion, always increasing the number of seats to meet the growth in population and always staying in around an average population per seat of 67,000, and now we're going to reduce this from 130 to 103.

In this bill it says that we are going to mirror the federal seat arrangements. The question might be asked: Do we really want to follow another level of government's rationale for determining our riding boundaries forever and a day? The Harris government says, "Whatever the federal government does, we'll mirror that." They even said in their commonsense document, "We'll go from 130 seats to 99 by using the federal MPs."

However, it went on to say, "We'll enter into discussion with the federal government to ensure the new boundaries are fairer." There wasn't much talk about that. There wasn't much talk about that here tonight from the government side. I didn't hear anybody say: "We went to the federal government, and we wanted to find out if this was fair. Do your criteria for membership in your Legislature differ from ours? Why do you have a Legislature of that size? How does it pertain to selecting the number of seats and population, geographical differences and commonality of community and the number of provinces in the country?"

I didn't hear that the government opposite went to the federal government and said: "Let's discuss this. We're thinking of going from 130 seats to 99, but we promised in the revolution document that we would talk to you." I haven't heard that you did. I hope to hear that you actually did consult. I'd be interested to know what the federal government told you. What did they tell you about their rationale for seats? What did they tell you? Why?

We have a great country, sea to sea to sea. We have vast expanses of land. We have metropolitan areas. We have small towns. My riding doesn't have a town bigger than 4,500 people. It's 90 miles long. Now the government says, "We need fewer politicians."

We are going to give up the control, apparently, of how we set our seating arrangement by population and by need to the federal government, which no doubt uses a totally different rationale than we would here in Ontario. Ontario MPPs will have the highest average number of individuals represented by their members, at 107,770 people per riding. That's an average population per seat, almost 108,000.

The riding of Essex-Kent, the one that I represent now, has 62,000 people in it. It is indeed a smaller population than many and probably all of the ridings in the metropolitan area here of Toronto. However, recognizing the commonality of communities, recognizing distance, that riding was formulated. But under the Harris plan to reduce MPPs, the riding will change in name, and instead of 62,000 approximately — that's a round number — it will increase to 102,000, nearly 40,000 people.

2320

The approximately 108,000 people within a riding here in Ontario, on average, is higher than for MPs and double Quebec. It may require that MPPs will need more staffing and telephone work. I think that's particularly true in the north.

In the revolution document, it is stated that you would reduce the number of seats, you would cut the MPP

pension plan and tax-free benefits, and you say that it would save \$1.1 million. That's what you said in the revolution document: \$1.1 million worth of savings will come from this. But now we hear from the government side that you're going to save \$11 million. It went from \$1.1 million to \$11 million. So, what are you talking about? Did you make an error in your campaign promise, the revolution document or have you made an error in the \$11-million savings? Has the government considered in these savings plans that you project any severance for staff? Have you calculated what the same level of service provided today would cost under the new electoral map?

I just want to quote a little bit, as it pertains to the rural aspect of this. In *Farm and Country* magazine, there was an editorial. It said:

"Northern Ontario is a definite loser, with six fewer seats on the new map. Farmers in Rainy River will now belong to a riding equal to one third the land mass of Ontario."

Later on, it went on to say:

"In other areas, rural areas are joined with urban, effectively silencing the farm voice. Agriculture minister Noble Villeneuve's riding, for instance, will be carved into three, moving him from a strictly rural riding to one including the city of Cornwall."

They have concerns, in that editorial, about the representation for rural seats.

As well, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture in its members' digest, the fall issue — it's current, as is the legislation — says that rural seats in Ontario in absolute terms will go from 34 to 19 and in percentage terms from 26% to 18%. They're concerned about the reduction of rural seats from 34 to 19. They show a definition of "rural," and I'm not going to describe that, but for those members opposite who want to see a view of what the Ontario Federation of Agriculture thinks of this, they should have a look.

I met with Tony Morris recently, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and we spoke about outstanding issues that the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs may address; some we believe there's legislation coming soon. When we got through with those issues that have been on the table or that they want on the table, Mr Morris said to me, "I'm concerned about the loss of democracy and the loss of the voice for the rural part of Ontario." Indeed, I do believe he felt that included not only southern Ontario but northern Ontario.

Who else has concerns for the changing of the ridings? Premier Klein has concerns. Premier Klein is concerned about changes in his province, and he wants to review the impact of redistribution on rural ridings in his province. There was a suggestion made that would reduce the rural ridings in his province, and Ralph Klein said: "Maybe we should wait. Maybe we should be concerned about the reduction of the voice for rural ridings." Ralph Klein, I'm led to understand, is the right wing of the Conservative voice in Canada, and yet he has concerns for rural Ontario.

In Bill 81 we see an affront to democracy, an affront to the people and the way we have always projected our wishes to have the Ontario, and indeed Canada, governed. It's a lessening of the rural voice, and the total savings



that the government is talking about are questionable. In the revolution document you say, "\$1.1 million worth of savings" and today from the government side we're hearing \$11 million worth of savings.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture was so concerned about this issue that they attended the hearings at the standing committee on general government. Mr Kelly, the vice-president of that organization, appeared and said, "It would appear from the information we have at this time that the percentage of rural seats is going to drop...and it would seem then that agriculture's voice and rural Ontario's voice is going to be somewhat diminished and somewhat muted if we go ahead with the redistribution in the way we're talking about." He was very concerned and went on to say, "...the 'No cuts to agriculture' promise" — we all remember that one; it was like the one with policing, health care and education — "continued attention to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs that appears to want to reduce and minimize the number of staff, the number of programs, the ability for information dissemination and transmittal in rural Ontario and agricultural Ontario, at the same time removing the political representation." He was saying: "You're reducing the voice of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. You're making cuts, something you said you wouldn't do."

I believe the first act of the ministry was to cut the fruit land program that was of significant interest to the Niagara region. The ministry is not giving out the information like it did, according to Mr Kelly, and at the same time the government wants to remove political representation. I think there's strong cause for the government to reconsider what it's doing here.

The members opposite say this is something they planned for in their revolution document, that this is something they told the electorate they would do. In the notes that go with Bill 81 it states in the first line, "The bill is intended to achieve savings by reducing the number of Ontario's provincial electoral districts."

It appears that the government is keenly aware that they can't give up 30% of their revenues and maintain any of their promises and they're seeking every way they can to find savings. So what do they do? They say: "Let's cut the number of representatives in this House. We'll save money." This is a money issue with the government. It's not one of democracy, it's not one of strong voices for rural communities, those areas with large expanses of land mass to cover; it's about saving money. It says so. The first line says, "We want to save money." They don't care about the voice of the people in Ontario. They don't care about the rich history we've had.

I wonder too if the Premier, in his misguided notion that he's going to be re-elected, is saying, "If I have a smaller caucus, if I don't have as many politicians around, I'll win again." He's not right in that regard. "I will win again and I'll have a smaller caucus to control. I'll be able to mute those members more easily. There won't be nearly as many of them running around and saying, 'The Minister of Health is not doing my area any good.' There won't be people saying, 'The reduction of seats is not good.'" There won't be people on his side of

the House criticizing his own actions, and that may be another reason: smaller caucus, more control.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments and questions?

2330

**Mr Wildman:** I want to congratulate the member for Essex South on his presentation. As he was speaking, a couple of things he said really struck home with me. It's interesting, when you observe the Conservative government, which promises they keep and which promises they reject, particularly when one is concerned about rural Ontario. One of the arguments the government has put forward for passing this bill is that they said they were going to do it, they told everybody they were going to do it and so they should do it.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** We're keeping our promise.

**Mr Wildman:** The member says they're keeping their promises. I also remember that the government, when they were in opposition campaigning, said, "We will not cut the funding for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs." They said that agriculture and the rural community were not getting their fair share. And what was the first thing they did? The member for the united counties and East Grenville stood here as an advocate for agriculture and rural affairs and had to preside over the gutting of that ministry. If it weren't for the farm tax rebate, there wouldn't be any funding in that ministry at all. Rural Ontario is being shortchanged by this government.

Why is it that they must keep this promise, ill advised as it is, but they're quite willing to break the promises they made to rural Ontario and to farmers in this province that they would maintain and enhance the funding for rural Ontario and for agriculture? It seems that they've sort of cherry-picked the promises they made. They keep this promise, meaning less representation for rural Ontario, because it's in line with the less funding they're providing for rural Ontario.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I just want to make a few comments. Listen, I have been a supporter of fewer members in this House for a period of eight or nine years. In fact, before the redistribution in 1987, I suggested that this House go to 94 members from the 120 members at that time. What did we do? We increased the number of members from 120 to 130 members.

I want to tell you, I've been here for some 20 years —

**Interjection:** Oh, too long.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Some would say too long, some would say too short, and they may be referring to my physical stature in that case.

Notwithstanding that, I've got to tell you that I don't feel the Legislature is going to be in any way shortchanged in terms of the debate they will have, the committees they will have or the people they will represent. In fact, when I came here in 1977, I represented about 60,000 people; I now represent about 110,000 people. Quite frankly, with the assistance we have received through our constituency offices, I believe I can take care of 110,000 people in terms of their requirements. I have a very efficient constituency office.



I just don't understand why so many people in the opposition want to keep their jobs at all costs. It seems to me that it makes eminent sense of the public to have coincident boundaries with the federal ridings. It's much easier for the people to understand: one federal member, one provincial member, 103 seats. Well, 103 members can contribute as much as 130 members. I believe the public is in favour of this. I don't understand —

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Cochrane North will come to order.

**Mr Gravelle:** I want to thank the member for Essex-Kent for a really terrific speech, one that was particularly meaningful for a member from northern Ontario. He truly did his work in terms of research and telling the members of the House about the history of previous boundary commissions and previous members of the Conservative government in the past who recognized the need to maintain 15 ridings in the north. An important point he made was that the reason they felt 15 ridings should be maintained in the north was for the people, not the politicians. This isn't about politicians keeping their jobs. This is about the people. The ridings belong to the people. The MPPs are simply temporary occupants of those positions. It's really remarkable that he gives us the history and nobody else has been able to do that.

I think it's also important to understand why those of us in the north are very concerned and are really quite frustrated by this government. We've watched for the last year and a half as they've continued to remove offices, programs and policies from the north. They've taken away the family support regional offices. They've closed the environmental lab. There has been a continual process of abandoning the north. We have been sitting here fighting it vigorously and obviously hoping the government will do so.

It's impossible for us to sit here and listen to the government members tell us this has nothing to do with less representation, nothing to do with that at all, that the north can handle it, when it's clear they do not have a great understanding at all of what the needs of the people are. The needs of the people in northern Ontario need to be met. They want to be able to spend time with and have access to us. We want to have access to them. This particular bill is one that absolutely confirms that this government truly is continuing in its process of simply abandoning the north.

**Mr Len Wood:** We've listened to a good presentation from the member for Essex-Kent. He covered a lot of area in his comments as to why people are opposed to this particular redistribution bill. It's a bill that's brought forward by a Conservative caucus. It's not a committee set up from all political parties that would look at the different regions.

We heard some of the committee members who were attacking a lot of the witnesses in Dryden, in Sault Ste Marie, in Timmins, in Ottawa and in London. Some of the people went on TV during the day and said: "It's a waste of time to go through northern Ontario and listen to these presentations because we're not going to make any amendments. We're not going to listen to the people

who are making presentations. It's kind of a joke." That was on CBC news when we were in Dryden.

I think Mr Gilchrist still thinks he's working in a Canadian Tire store, because he thinks the government is run like a business. A government is all about representation where the member gets close to the constituents and the constituents know exactly where they can go to get representation. When you eliminate 33% of the representation from northern Ontario, it puts the MPP farther away from the members altogether. It's a disgrace to see that the Conservative caucus is going to ram this bill through the Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Essex-Kent has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Hoy:** I appreciate the comments of all members in this regard. I appreciate their concern for the north and rural Ontario. I think, however, that the member for Carleton has missed my main points. Certainly the MPP will do the very best he or she can to meet the people and serve the people. There's no doubt about that. That's not the question and that's not the point. It's the access to the MPP.

I have two riding offices. There may be requirements, particularly for those in the north, to expand it even beyond that. My riding is 90 miles long. The previous member had two riding offices. The one before that had two. The federal member has two offices. It's a requirement. You can't displace people and have them driving 90 miles from one end of the riding to the other and back. That's 180 miles. It's not serving the people well at all, and it's a hardship.

The member also talked about people recognizing their federal MP as opposed to the provincial MPP. This has come up before from other members in the House opposite, that people are confused about their MPP and their MP and the roles they play. Let me tell you, when Brian Mulroney was in power the people knew exactly who the federal member was, and they reduced that government to two seats — two seats. It was clear to the people.

I go back once again and I say that the explanation notes that come with the bill say this is solely to achieve savings.

2340

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Len Wood:** Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here at this time of night and know that we still have another 20 or 25 minutes before the Legislature adjourns for the day. At a time when we're getting very close to Christmas we find out that the Conservative government is going to bring in legislation to reduce the number of politicians in the province.

We know they're having problems. We saw the finance minister apologize last week, saying: "I'm sorry. I can't give the details of all the cuts that are going to happen. We know \$3 billion in cuts will have to happen over the next while, but I'm not able to give details of it right now because I want to wait. We're going to spread the pain over a number of days and weeks." And that's probably what's going to happen.

This piece of legislation is strictly a political message that Mike Harris is delivering to the people in Ontario.



He campaigned a number of years ago based on the fact that "If I promise a tax cut and if I promise that there will be fewer politicians in the Legislature, maybe we'll get elected into a majority government," and sure, they got elected.

But at that time they were promising 99 members in the Ontario Legislature, then all of a sudden they got a surprise. The Conservative government was thrown out of office in Ottawa and the Liberal government was put in, and they find out that the Liberals in Ottawa are going to increase the representation from 99 to 103. They said, "Surprise! We aren't really promising 99 members of the Ontario Legislature now, because the Liberals under Jean Chrétien are going to raise it to 103. Maybe we should raise it to 103 in Ontario." This is basically what Mike Harris has done in Ontario.

I travelled into three different communities during public hearings, and it was interesting to note that as we were doing that, we had a couple of members doing press conferences. They thought they were doing a wonderful thing. They'd go into Dryden and talk to the CBC news and they'd say, "It's kind of a waste of time to come up into places like Dryden and these places, because we're not really going to listen to anything, we're not going to make any changes, we're not going to make any amendments and we're not going to listen to any amendments coming through." That was on the CBC news. We had Terence Young and we had Gilchrist, who were only too happy to talk to the media and make a joke about the public process that was happening.

This is the first time ever that a political party has decided that they're going to ram through a piece of legislation like this. It was always a matter that you'd set up a committee to go around the province and listen to feedback from the constituents, and as a result of the feedback they'd decide how the boundaries are going to be. In this particular case, you have Mike Harris and Jean Chrétien jumping into bed, and all of a sudden they decide: "There's confusion out there. Some people don't understand who the federal member is and who the provincial member is, so we're going to make the names the same."

*Interjections.*

**Mr Len Wood:** We hear heckling from the other side. It wouldn't be the first time that a Conservative and a Liberal jumped into bed together.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Hogwash.

**Mr Len Wood:** We hear the Solicitor General. He's heckling. He should think about the situation at Ipperwash more so than sitting in the Legislature here at about a quarter to 12 at night, because he's got problems. What happened at Ipperwash he has to take responsibility for. You can't flush it off. You can't fluff it off on to somebody else. You are the Solicitor General. You're the top cop in this province. You had a native person who died at Ipperwash —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs Marland:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask you to ask the member for Cochrane North to speak to the bill. I do not believe he's in order at this point speaking on all these other subjects.

**The Acting Speaker:** It is a point of order. The member will bring his debate within the bill.

**Mr Len Wood:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I appreciate your advice.

We're talking about a 30% tax break that is being given to wealthiest 10% of the people in Ontario. You're going to take \$11 million out of the representation at Queen's Park. We have no problem with redistribution. We've never had a problem with redistribution. We're saying it should be done in the proper manner. The proper manner is that you have an all-political party and they go out and look at the boundaries and they decide whether it's going to be 130, whether it should be 120, whether it should be 100, whether it should be 75. But for Mike Harris and his Conservative caucus to say, "We made a stupid promise during the campaign; we promised fewer politicians; we promised a 30% tax break; we know we can't deliver on it, but we're going to try," for them to come out and say that they're going to pass this into law now, it doesn't make any sense to me. It doesn't make any sense to a lot of the constituents.

As I said before, I was happy to be able to travel through the province.

**Mr Murdoch:** Which one was the stupid promise? You said we made one.

**Mr Len Wood:** I know the member for Owen Sound would like to make some comments on this. He'd like to get up and talk for half an hour, but Mike Harris has told him: "You sit in your seat. We've heard enough comments in the newspapers." We're hoping he's going to vote in favour of destroying this bill, Bill 81, but we know if he does vote with the NDP or with the opposition parties there's a possibility he's going to be removed from parliamentary assistant. That's a problem for him because you're reducing his salary. We're hoping he's going to come on side and not just speak to the media and say that he's unhappy with the fewer politicians legislation. We're hoping he's going to come on side.

We know the government is in trouble right now. We know that for a fact. Other than that, they would not have introduced legislation that will allow up to 35,000 one-armed bandits, the gambling machines that are going to bring in \$1 billion dollars.

**Mr Bradley:** Video slot machines.

**Mr Len Wood:** The video slot machines. It's desperation on the part of the Conservative caucus that they're bringing that in. They're trying to find ways and means. They promised a balanced budget. They promised a 30% tax break to the wealthiest people in this province. They're scrambling at everything.

I mentioned earlier that when I was a kid, five or six years old, I used to get my dad's tools and I used to take the bicycle apart and I used to play with all kinds of machines. You can tear everything apart. You can spread everything out in the garage, you can spread everything out in the yard. That's exactly what Mike Harris has done: He's torn education apart, he's torn health care apart, he's torn everything apart in the province of Ontario. He's moving at such speed — the amalgamation of municipalities, user fees, one thing or another, one after another — and he's looking for money. He's trying to grab money as fast as he can.



As I said, it reminds me of when I was a kid. I can relate to that now with my grandchildren where they tear something apart and they say, "We've got it all apart now but we don't know how to put it back together." That's exactly what Mike Harris has done. We know that in the last election when Brian Mulroney was doing that, he got two seats elected. He only got two members elected.

2350

Mr Speaker, I know you're finding this exciting and we're working on getting through until midnight or 1 o'clock in the morning or whatever you decide, but it's important that people out there know that the fewer politicians — all it is is words. It's a message out there that \$11 million is going to go back to the wealthiest people in Ontario, the 10% upper-income people, and we're not going to be any further ahead.

**Mr Baird:** You're giving your tax cut back, Len.

**Mr Len Wood:** We hear the Conservative backbenchers. I know the member for Algoma is listening quite attentively. We hear the Conservative backbenchers and we don't normally hear this kind of heckling at 10 minutes to midnight. They laugh and joke about the large geographical area that has to be represented. We hear that they think it's a joke in the new riding of Timmins-James Bay that people are going to have to travel 740 kilometres from one end of the riding to the other.

**Mr Wildman:** How far is it to Moosonee?

**Mr Len Wood:** Well, the only way you can get in there is by train or flying in. You cannot go in there, like a lot of members in the Metropolitan Toronto area can, have a meeting and then ride through four or five different ridings. It's a big area. You can fly for three hours from Kapuskasing to Peawanuck, which is up on the Hudson Bay coast, and have a meeting there. That's probably the only meeting you're going to have during that day, if you're flying with a Twin Otter airplane, and get back to Moosonee and probably have another meeting that night. It's huge.

Then they said: "We don't think you're representing enough people, so on top of that we'll add on the city of Timmins. We'll give you Timmins as a bonus for this particular area." As a result, we end up with the Timmins-James Bay area taking in the county of Cochrane and Cochrane North.

The town of Cochrane is a beautiful town. The mayor of the town of Cochrane said he's a Conservative by choice, but he said, "I cannot stand for Mike Harris and his Conservative caucus slapping everybody in northern Ontario." He's slapping us one after the other. They cut the MNR. They cut the MTO. They cut every service we can have. Now they've privatized. They say, "We're going to privatize the MTO." All that means is that you take a person who's making \$23 an hour and you say, "We're going to fire you, but you can have the same job back if you want to go work for a contractor down the street and you can get \$10 or \$12 an hour."

**Mr Bradley:** What does René Piché say about this?

**Mr Len Wood:** René Piché is very upset. René Fontaine, as I'm sure you're aware, is a representative of the chamber of commerce of the town of Hearst. He said the chamber of commerce in the town of Hearst is very upset. They never thought for a minute that they would

have a Conservative government that would try to bring in legislation that is not based on the boundaries commission.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Is that René Fontaine or René Piché?

**Mr Len Wood:** I had René Brunelle. René Brunelle was there for 23 years. René Piché was there for five years. He couldn't get elected to dog catcher now if he wanted to. René Fontaine could get re-elected again, but he gave the job to me. He said, "I think you can do a better job, Len." He's very supportive of what we're doing.

I know René Piché always tells me: "Say hello to the Solicitor General, because me and Bob Runciman, we're friends for years. You got re-elected." But René Piché could not get re-elected. I shouldn't talk about him that badly, because he had some illness and I sympathize with him. He's on his way to Florida right now.

It's quite a joke when the spin doctors in the Premier's office say, "If somebody asks you the question out there, 'Why are you firing 27 colleagues in the Legislature?' you say, 'No one is being fired; each MPP has been voted in a constituency until the next provincial election.'" They're trying to pretend that nothing is really happening, yet Mike Harris and his cabinet are the ones who are doing it.

When you see Mike Harris try to go to a banquet in North Bay — and that used to be his home. He's moved out of North Bay now; he's left northern Ontario. He moved to Toronto. He goes back to North Bay and he tries to do a fund-raiser in North Bay, and, lo and behold, they have to bring out 200 policemen. Why? They say: "Mike Harris is coming to town. He's going to be attacked, he's going to be killed. We're going to get 200 policemen out there to protect him." That's the situation. It's terrible.

They say, "Will this reduction mean that northern Ontario will be underrepresented?"

**Mr Murdoch:** Who said that?

**Mr Len Wood:** That's the spin doctors in Mike Harris's office who are telling you people what to say. We heard that from two of our colleagues on the other side. They used the exact words. They said: "Northern Ontario is not going to be underrepresented. Even though we're going to take 33% of the representation away, it won't affect northern Ontario. You're going to be farther away from your constituents, but we know that it can be done." The spin doctors are putting everything — yet we know that this particular legislation is a matter of the Conservative caucus and Mike Harris is passing it on through the cabinet and the caucus and saying, "We've got to ram this legislation through; it's a promise that we made."

It's a stupid promise to say that we're going to reduce the number of politicians, we're going to have fewer politicians. At the same time, we're going to give a 30% tax break, which is about \$5 billion to \$6 billion per year of borrowed money. They're going to take borrowed money to give a tax break to the wealthiest, and yet they cannot continue to have 15 northern members representing northern Ontario.

I don't personally have a problem because in the new riding that's going to be Timmins-James Bay, all we're adding on is a city with a larger population. But for some particular areas, we're going to have a lesser voice at Queen's Park, and it's sad. It's kind of sad and ironic that at this time of night we're still talking about fewer politicians.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Len Wood:** I know there's a lot of heckling on the other side, and I was faced with this going through committee hearings. As I said before, for those people who might have been using their remote to flip through the channels, we had Mr Young and Mr Gilchrist in Dryden. They were saying: "Why are we up here? Why aren't we up in Dryden? Why are we going through northern Ontario? Why are we having public hearings? Because we have word that there are not going to be any changes made."

As a result, the NDP caucus did not make any amendments to this legislation, because we felt the legislation

was flawed. It was flawed from the beginning. It was a stupid promise that was made during the election campaign, that we're going to have 99 members in the Ontario Legislature. Then all of a sudden, lo and behold, Jean Chrétien said, "We're going to raise it up to 103." Then Mike Harris says, "We'll raise it up to 103."

During the public hearings, there was no sincerity on the part of the Conservative backbenchers. We had as many as eight people on the government side on the committee lined up against us. We were determined that we wanted to hear the public process continue.

I know you're looking at me, Mr Speaker. Is this a good point in time to continue my debate to another day?

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes. I want to remind you that it's quite parliamentary to refer to members by their ridings or their positions. Now that we are stopped, would you please take your seat.

It being nearly 12 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 2400.*

## ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Lines	Should read:
131A	5471	2	30-31	<i>Interjection.</i>



## CONTENTS

Tuesday 3 December 1996

### THIRD READINGS

#### **Fewer Politicians Act, 1996,**

Bill 81, *Mr David Johnson*

Mr Bisson . . . . . **5581**, 5597, 5599,  
5611

Mr Gravelle . . . . . 5595, 5610, 5629

Mr Murdoch . . . . . 5596

Mr Len Wood . . . . . 5596, **5630**

Mr Crozier . . . . . 5596

Mr Tascona . . . . . **5597**, 5600

Mr Wildman . . . . . 5598, 5610, 5621,  
5625, 5629

Mrs Marland . . . . . 5599, 5616, 5621

Mr Bradley . . . . . 5599, 5624

Mrs Caplan . . . . . **5600**, 5604

Mr Cooke . . . . . 5602

Mr Baird . . . . . 5603

Mr Conway . . . . . 5603, 5616, 5625

Mr Pouliot . . . . . 5603, **5604**, 5708

Mr Clement . . . . . 5606

Mr Miclash . . . . . 5707

Mr Maves . . . . . 5607, 5625

Mr Stewart . . . . . **5608**, 5611

Mrs Papatello . . . . . 5611

Mr Ramsay . . . . . **5612**, 5617

Mr Hampton . . . . . 5616

Mr Marchese . . . . . **5516**, 5622

Mr Newman . . . . . 5621

Mr O'Toole . . . . . **5622**

Mr Hoy . . . . . **5626**, 5630

Mr Sterling . . . . . 5629

Adjourned . . . . . 5633

**Erratum** . . . . . 5633

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 3 décembre 1996

### TROISIÈME LECTURE

#### **Loi de 1996 réduisant le nombre de députés, projet de loi 81,**

*M. David Johnson*

M. Bisson . . . . . 5583, 5595, 5607

M. Pouliot . . . . . 5603, 5604, 5606,  
5608

M<sup>me</sup> Papatello . . . . . 5611, 5621

M. Marchese . . . . . 5618

Débat ajourné . . . . . 5633











